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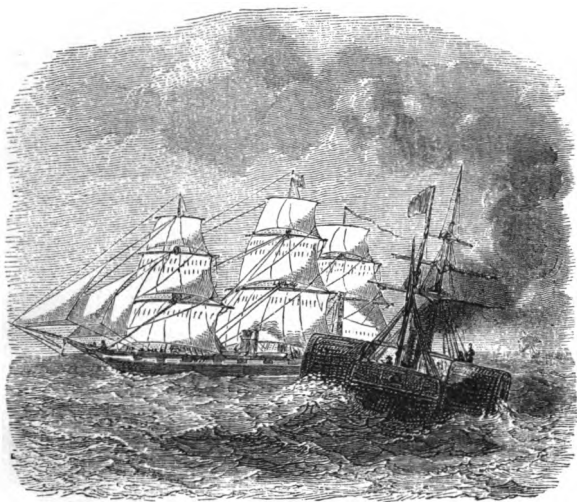
TALES
OF
NAVAL AND MILITARY LIFE.



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TALES
OF
NAVAL AND MILITARY LIFE.



FROM THE FRENCH OF
ALPHONSE BALLEYDIER,
ETC.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present little volume is placed before the English public in the conviction that the stories it contains will be found conducive no less to the edification than to the amusement of its readers, more especially those of the two professions indicated in its title page. The tales are from the graphic pen of an able writer in a neighbouring country, and it is hoped that their merits will secure for them a popularity among ourselves little inferior to that which they have met with in their native land.

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TALES OF NAVAL AND MILITARY LIFE.

OUR LADY OF ARMOR.

MY DEAR

I received the letter you so kindly favoured me with, and I take the first opportunity of replying to it. I begin by thanking Monsieur L'Abbe for having been pleased to think that my *souvenirs* of the sea might be useful in furnishing materials to compile a volume so interesting as that which he proposes; only as I am not much in the habit of writing, the few details which I am able to give will, I fear, scarcely answer your expectations. However, I will do my best, and your own talent will supply any defect in my narrations.

Let me first congratulate you, sir, upon your having undertaken this work. We do not appreciate sufficiently our brave soldiers and sailors. They are a class hitherto too much neglected, though really meriting our attention in a high degree; and in this point of view your proposed work will be extremely useful.

Living in a garrisoned and fortified town, which is at the same time a seaport, I have been able to study at my leisure both soldiers and sailors. One would say that both these classes of men were formed from the same mould, both possessing the

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same sentiments of honour, of devotedness, and of self-sacrifice: but it appears to me that sailors, exposed as they continually are to the war of the elements, are, on the whole, the most open to religious impressions. Nothing makes people think so much of God as the sight of the wonders and the dangers of the deep.

The ceremony, about which you have asked me to give you a few details, is one of those occasions in which this feeling manifests itself more powerfully than usual. It is one which dates from time immemorial; the great Revolution, which swallowed up so many other things in its abyss, having spared it to the present day.

Pilchard fishing is, as you know, carried on for five months during the fine season, and is one of the most important branches of commerce on our coasts. Thus, within a radius of twenty leagues or more, no less than six to eight hundred boats may be seen occupied in this fishery, which usually commences on the last week in May or the beginning of June; but it is always on the Feast of St. John that the Benediction takes place, in order to supplicate the divine protection, and to pray for the success of a fishery upon which depends the livelihood of so many families.

On this day there is an assemblage of all the boats from Lorient, Port Louis, the island of Groix, the bay of Intol, and from the coast of Armor and Plœmeur. At the hour appointed for the ceremony, there may be seen, in the different points of the horizon, the boats of the various parishes, each with its cross raised aloft, and its flag floating over the waters, while the fishermen, in holiday attire, sing hymns and canticles in honour of the Immaculate Virgin, the holy patroness of mariners.

When the boats are all assembled in the strait

which separates the isle of Groix from the mainland, the priest, who has been previously chosen for this office by his brethren, appears on the "boat of honour;" then, at a given signal, all heads are uncovered, every knee is bent, and the "*Ave Maris stella*" is sung by a united chorus of voices, while every heart is filled with hope and confidence in God. The priest raises his hands towards Heaven in prayer, and they fall again laden with blessings for those brave men who often, in the same place, have seen the angel of death hover on the wings of the tempest. How beautiful to see them all prostrate before the minister of Him Who has power to save and to destroy, proving by their attitude and their fervour that they know whence salvation comes, and that prayer is the best safeguard against danger.

The different boats belonging to the vessels in port, preceded by the prefect of the-marine, are always the first to give the example of faith and confidence in God by their presence, and by their pious and recollected behaviour; but it is impossible to describe the impression produced at the moment of the Benediction, by the music, which mingles its warlike harmonies with the peaceful chant of the multitude, and assists in worthily celebrating the praises of the Almighty upon the altars of the ocean. This is what I have often seen, sir; and I never witness such scenes without being affected even to tears, and exclaiming with Bossnet—"God alone is great!"

I next proceed to tell you of the confidence which all our sailors have in *Notre Dame de l'Armor*, which is the Breton for OUR LADY OF THE SEA. If you were to ask them they would tell you how often she has saved them from shipwreck, and they would relate numerous incidents, each more wonderful than the other, in proof of her guardianship. In-

deed, the walls of the chapel, erected by the pious sailors in honour of *Notre Dame de l'Armor*, are covered with offerings, testifying to her powerful intercession for sailors in distress, and of their gratitude to their gracious protectress. This chapel enjoys so great a celebrity, and is so much venerated by the French navy, that no vessel, either of war or commerce, great or small, ever goes out of the roads for a long voyage, or returns to port, without three salutes of cannon. After this, if an ecclesiastic is on board, he entones the "*Ave Maris stella*;" if not, the oldest sailor begins, and the strain is taken up and continued by the crew. I may here allude also to the pious custom which the superior officers of vessels have preserved, in causing their crews to assist at a solemn Requiem, as soon as they arrive in a Catholic port, for the repose of the soul of any sailor, without distinction of rank, who may have died during the voyage. Nor must I omit to mention the respect which the officers and the crews have for their chaplain, both as the representative of God in the exercise of his sacred functions, and as their brother and their friend in the ordinary relations of life.

The progress of religion in the navy is another subject on which I would say a few words. Placed as one is here, it is impossible to help remarking how rapidly this improvement has taken place. Since the revival of religious feeling in France, very many officers of the navy, conquering by the greatness of their mind the littleness of human respect, regularly approach the sacraments. Thus, doing their duty as christians, as well as their duty as sailors, they give a wholesome example to that brave army of sailors who, since the commencement of the war, have begun to besiege the confessionals, some asking for the scapular, others recommending

themselves to our prayers, and all anxious to prepare themselves for the dangers of the combat, and for a passage into eternity.

I will give you one example taken from among a thousand. The circumstance happened on the deck of a frigate going to the Crimea, under the command of one of my own friends.

The first night this worthy officer was at sea, he called the boatswain to him and said,—

“I am in the habit of saying morning and evening prayers, and I always make a rule of obeying the commandments of the church in sanctifying Sundays and the solemn feasts. I do not make any secret of this: bad actions only need concealment. On the other hand, I do not wish to make a parade of my religion. I shall be glad that the crew should know that I wish to act as a christian, but I would rather they learned it from others than from myself. I do not mean to give orders that prayers shall be said in common on deck, but I shall place my own room at the service of those who are disposed to avail themselves of this opportunity of performing their religious duties, and I shall be obliged by your communicating thus much to the officers and the rest of the crew.”

“Yes, Captain,” replied the boatswain, “and I ask your permission the first to be among the number.”

“I shall have great pleasure in finding you beside me before God, as well as before the enemies of our country.”

“Thank you, Captain.”

Next day a few sailors came with the boatswain into the Captain's room. The day after a still greater number responded to the invitation; and this went on from day to day, until at last the company became so numerous that the Captain's room proved too small to contain them.

I could give you many other instances, but for fear of tiring you, I will, for the present, conclude.

THE incident which we are about to relate to you, dear reader, happened on the deck of a frigate which lay at the time between the islands of Cape Vert and the coast of Guinea. Two persons, who had retired to the hinder part of the vessel, were seated close to each other on a piece of cannon. The eldest might have been from forty to forty-five years of age. His countenance wore that severe and almost harsh expression which indicated a strong and determined will; at the same time there was a frankness and openness about it which denoted a generous heart. His complexion was strongly embrowned; his large mouth, in which was a long pipe, was adorned with a set of teeth whose beautiful white contrasted strongly with his dark complexion; his jet black hair, curled according to the fashion, was just beginning to get grey on his temple, already slightly bare. His height was above the average, and his whole figure seemed to show a strong constitution, strengthened still more by habitual activity.

His companion could not have been more than twenty years old; he was pale, and had long fair hair, with an expression mild and melancholy, and thin, vermillion-coloured lips, which one would have thought were rather those of a young girl full of dreams and poetry. All this was but in appearance, however, for underneath this frail and timid exterior there was nerve and energy: it was, as it were, a flower upon a stem of steel. These two were father and son: the father a veteran sailor, and commander of the frigate; the son obliged to go to sea for the first time, by his father, against his will.

It was evening. Large grey clouds were sailing

about in the sky, like the great wings of the sea gull ; the wind was blowing a gale right a-head ; the sea rose in short, chopping billows ; the frigate was running on a starboard tack, and every now and then shipping a wave.

The young man, his face buried in his hands, seemed plunged in deep thought.

"About what, or whom, are you thinking, Jean?" asked his father.

"I am thinking of my mother."

"Who is, no doubt, praying for us at this hour."

"And who is left alone, quite alone, poor woman."

"We were obliged to"——

"You were, father, I know ; but I"——

"You were as well as I—a thousand"——

"Do not swear, father ; you know that makes the angels weep."

"And the demons laugh. You are right ; I won't swear any more. I was saying that you too were obliged to come."

"Why this indispensable necessity?"

"Because such was my will, in the first instance, and then because the honour of our name required it. For two hundred and fifty years, from father to son, the family of Kerouarbequem has produced brave and noble sailors, fearing God, loving their country, and serving her kings ; and as I succeeded to my father in the genealogical tree, so I wish that my son should succeed to his father."

"But you know that I am your only son."

"So much the more reason for it. When we come back from this expedition I will marry you to one of our worthy Breton women, whom I shall choose myself, so that our genealogical tree may shoot out more vigorously than ever for the honour of our country. Do you see, my son?"

"I see that you will make my life miserable with all your notions of family and name."

"You take advantage, sir, of the great affection I have for you. If I had had the audacity to answer my deceased father as you have answered me, I should have run the risk of jumping over the bulwarks quicker than I should have wished."

"But you must know by this time, my dear father, that I was never made for a sailor. You know that God gives us at our birth an intelligence, which if applied in a wrong direction leads in the end to disappointment. How many clever people have been stopped at the first halting place because they have mistaken their road. Racine would have made a detestable sailor—Jean Bart would have produced execrable verses. Each man to his place. Yours is on board this ship; mine is with my mother, to"—

"To give vent to your silly ideas of literary glory, eh?"

"Why not? if God has given me this noble vocation."

"Fine vocation, truly, to scribble on paper, fit only for grocers and apothecaries! Shall I tell you candidly what I think about it, my son? This vocation you talk of is the vocation either of the sluggard or the conceited."

"Oh, father!"

"With this vocation one dies of hunger in a garret, especially if the person who has it is honest; with this vocation another dies of want in a hospital."

"Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Molière, did not die like that."

"But are there many Corneilles, Racines, Boileaus and Molières, pray? and if what they say is true,

Molière was obliged to become a clown to gain his living; Boileau only drank wine on great days; Racine lived on vegetables of his own name, [*Racines, roots,*] and Corneille, the great Corneille, as you call him, was obliged to wait barefoot near a mile stone while a cobbler, who was richer than himself, mended the holes in his shoes. There, my dear child, is the exact worth of literary glory. Two words comprise the whole—disappointment, want."

"The conscientious writer has all the more merit."

"A merit which is worth a '0' put before a number. Literary glory, according to my notion, is not worth more than this puff of smoke!" Saying this the old sailor sent into the air a vigorous puff of smoke, which disappeared in spiry fumes. "You speak of poetry—ah well, where will you ever find more of this than on the sea, this magnificent poem of God. Every wave which passes under our eyes is a page in the immortal book of creation; every breeze which murmurs on our foreheads is a note sounding in the air from the celestial harmony. The sailor, who struggles all his life against storm and tempest, is the greatest poet I know. There is no life so beautiful as that of the sailor, my boy!"

"For those who like it, father."

"For all those who have tasted it. After having been at sea fifteen years you will think as I do. Meanwhile, leave off those melancholy airs, which make you look more like an innocent victim of persecution than a worthy member of the family of the Kerouarbequems. See how beautiful the sea is—have you ever seen anything so majestic?"

The sea did indeed present at this time a magnificent spectacle. Before the prow of the frigate the eye was carried on into infinite space; the lines of the horizon were undistinguishable, for the spangled heavens, dipping into the immense bed of waters,

blended with it and formed one undefined and uniform harmony. The waves, raised by the swell of the sea like the human breast upheaved by a giant breath, came roaring and breaking themselves one after another against the sides of the vessel; and then, thrown back by the same effort, disappeared to be swallowed up and succeeded by others. The sea-gulls, beating their white wings against the tops of the masts, seemed like mysterious messengers from heaven. Jean contemplated this grand scene with admiration.

"God is a great painter, father," cried he: "how many things are there not in this sublime picture which the eye does not perceive, and into which even thoughts cannot penetrate. Every wave, which perhaps rolls along some piece of wreck, tells us of the sad ruins of some cherished hope; each breeze that passes bears on its wing a name, a sigh, a complaint, a regret, a prayer. That star which shines so bright and then disappears, is the life of man, who is born in the morning, and who dies before the evening; for human life, in the eye of God, is less than a day.—Yes, father, you are right; the ocean is a beautiful and a magnificent thing."

"Is it not, my son? Courage! You will soon have a taste for it."

It was near midnight; the breeze had freshened still more.

"Adieu, my child," said the father to his son, pressing his hand affectionately: "reflect upon what I have just said, and if your repugnance to a sailor's life is really very great, we must try and procure for you a situation better and less precarious than that of an author, an 'ink eater,' as they say, for it is all the same."

Jean went to his cabin, and after a fervent prayer

went to bed and soon fell asleep. His angel guardian, who was doubtless watching over him, mingled in his sleep some of his most beautiful dreams. Jean loved his mother above all else in the world; he saw her with her loving smile bending over him, in order to imprint a kiss upon his lips. "My child," said she, in her softest tone, "a great danger threatens you; but fear nothing, I have placed you under the protection of another mother during your absence, and she will not abandon you. She is the august Mother of Jesus, whom I taught you to love and to invoke as a little child. Love her and invoke her still; for if your mother's heart is full of tenderness for you, Mary's heart is full of blessings for you too."

To this picture another succeeded not less beautiful to his eyes. Jean had returned to his home: he saw the spire of his village church—the church where he had been baptized, and had made his first communion; the garden where, on his mother's birthdays, he had so often gathered for her the prettiest flowers; the cliffs on which he had stood eagerly gazing over the ocean for the appearance of a sail, which might announce his father's return; the sea-shore, with its yellow sand, where for the first time his imaginative mind had pictured to its self horizons of infinite space. But now a sinister apparition came to supplant this ravishing vision of his childhood—the genius of the tempest had taken the place of the good angel with his lovely dreams, and had spread out his fiery wings over the ocean. The wind howled in the rigging, the furious waves dashed against the side of the frigate, which was running fast upon a reef of rocks. All of a sudden a long cry of distress was heard;—the frigate had struck, and was about to sink for ever with all on

board. Awakened by this frightful work of his imagination, Jean ran up quickly on deck: but the sky was now clear, the sea was calm and smooth as a mirror—it was but a dream!

The day following the sun rose in all his splendour, and the frigate was in a complete calm. The breeze had ceased to caress her; suspended on the waters like a gull without wings in the sky, she remained immoveable; the polished sea reflected the ardent rays of the sun; the vanes and streamers were at rest; the sails hung heavily on the masts; the rudder was paralyzed; the frigate itself, obeying only the feeble undulations of the waves, turned slowly on herself without aim or direction. The elevated temperature, too, of these regions, becoming more and more insupportable, seemed to augment the duration of the days, which had already become heavy as lead. The energies, both mental and physical, of the men, were giving way under these oppressive influences.

It was in these circumstances, so trying to sailors, that religion manifested its empire and its power. The chaplain, seconding the zeal of the officers, did all in his power to raise the drooping energies of the crew. Every morning and evening, from the top of the poop, which served for a pulpit, he gave a course of practical instructions suited to the capacity of the sailors, and always managed to finish in such a manner as to inspire his hearers with fresh courage, patience, and resignation; by mingling interesting anecdotes with his addresses, he was able to instruct and amuse them at the same time. Sometimes, too, in order to arouse their curiosity, he would start objections, and then answer them, destroying them (as his hearers would sometimes say) like the soap bubbles which disappear in the air when blown by a child.

One day a young midshipman, who delighted in Voltaire's works, ventured to say to him—

“The Catholic Church has had its day—don't you think so, sir?”

“My being with you,” replied the chaplain, “alone proves the contrary. If, as you say, the religion of Christ has had its day, we should not have a hundred thousand priests in France to teach the truth which it inculcates. From the first ages of Christianity, persecutors and unbelievers have said what you say—‘Christianity is dead.’ Some even intoned its burial chant at its very cradle; thus one of the fierce proconsuls of the Emperor Trajan wrote in the first century of the Christian era—‘In a short time persecutions will have smothered in blood this germ of the sect of Jesus.’ Trajan died, and the tree of the cross, more vigorous than ever, spread its benign shade over the whole universe. Three centuries later, Julian the Apostate said: ‘I will bury the Catholic Church in the coffin of the Galilean.’ Julian died, and the coffin of the Galilean became the tabernacle of the living God. Later still, in the sixteenth century, Luther, the proud and haughty monk who out of a revolt made a new religion, said, also: ‘The Catholic religion has had its time;’ and he sang a triumphant hymn upon what he called the destruction of the Roman Church. ‘O Pope!’ cried he in his rage against the successor of St. Peter—‘O Pope! my life has been a plague to you, my death shall be your destruction!’ Luther died, bequeathing to humanity many a bloody struggle of ferocious fanaticism. He died; but Papacy shines still in all the splendour of the sun of Zion. All the reformers who succeeded Luther have passed away like Luther, like Calvin, like Arius; but the religion of Jesus Christ has remained unmoved, unshaken, on the rock con-

stituted in the prince of the apostles by God himself. The modern philosophical and social systems will pass away like the reformers—they are passing away : but the Catholic religion, established for the happiness and salvation of mankind, will accompany humanity on its road to eternity until the last moment of time."

One day shortly after, the unbelieving novice, after saying to the chaplain, in an accent of profound conviction; "*Father, I believe,*" threw Voltaire's works to the sharks.

The calm, as much dreaded by sailors as the tempest, had now lasted for many long and tedious days. The frigate, detained as if by some invisible bond in an enchanted circle, moved about on the waves like a horse impatient in his bit, when one morning a light breeze seemed to lift slowly the streamers of the pennon, and at the same time to ripple the hitherto polished surface of the waters. The crew, assembled on the deck, watched with anxiety these first indications of atmospherical change. "Courage, my children," said the captain; "these signs do not deceive my old experience: before an hour is over I promise you we shall have wind enough to fill our sails;" and accordingly the breeze, which had been scarcely perceptible at first, began to take more and more consistence. The sails, indeed, did not yet move; but, as the sailors said, they seemed very anxious to do so.

All at once the sea, like a giant awaking after a long repose, seemed to take an enormous breath. The streamers fluttered, the upper sails began to expand; the frigate moved on its keel; the chopping waves seemed to bark after her like a greyhound who greets the return or the arrival of his master. At last the breeze had come. The impatient vessel now resumed its usual march, and cutting the

propitious waves, she careered along, leaving behind her a long line of silver.

It is chiefly for sailors that the proverb has been invented,—“Days follow each other, but they do not resemble each other.”

One evening, when nothing gave sign of an approaching storm, the sudden fall of the barometer attracted the attention of the captain; and soon after a heavy and prolonged rumbling was heard in the distance.

“No doubt it is the souls of the unfortunate creatures whom the sea has swallowed up calling out for prayers,” said the captain, laughing; “what think you, chaplain?”

“I think that prayer for the dead is a thing most just and salutary,” replied the chaplain quietly.

The noise seemed to come nearer every minute.

“All hands on deck!” cried the captain.

The frightened sea-gulls flew rapidly past, uttering cries of distress. “The cowards!” said the captain, with a coolness which inspired confidence in those around him.

“Well, my son,” said he to Jean, “prepare your artistic pencil, your inspiring muse, your poetic fire; you may want them all, for I predict a tremendous hurricane.”

Jean, who remembered his night vision of the storm, turned slightly pale.

“Shall you be afraid?” cried the old sailor, filling his pipe.

“That malady is unknown to Bretons, father.”

“Well, well, that is right! But here it begins in earnest—attention!”

The heavens were now covered with thick and livid clouds; the lightning traced its long zigzag of fire, and the thunder sent forth repeated growls. The captain rapidly called out the necessary direc-

tions, and the usual precautions which are taken before a squall had hardly been attended to, when the sea all at once became agitated, as if by an electric commotion; the wind whistled in the rigging, through which flocks of sea birds flew, uttering cries of fear. The tempest was now at its height: the ocean seemed to strain itself as if in convulsions. The lofty swelling billows clashed against each other with a hollow noise, and fell back again, burying themselves in a bed of foam.

"Well, Jean, how do you like that," said the captain.

"Too good to last long," said Jean; and then he added with enthusiasm, "Oh, how grand is the sea, and how great is God!"

The tempest had already lasted twenty-three hours, when the face of the heavens brightened up, and seemed to betoken the cessation of the tempest. The sea, although still rough, appeared to have fallen considerably; the thunder sounded more distant, and at longer intervals. It was evening: the captain, who had not quitted his post for a moment, was on his way to the cabin, when a sharp cry resounded amidst the flapping of the cordage—"A man overboard." At this cry the captain looked around for his son, who he perceived was no longer beside him. "My God!" cried he, as if seized by a sad presentiment—"My God, have mercy on me!"—while the crew ran like lightning to the quarter deck, and threw over every loose article they could lay their hands on—the hen-coops, pieces of wood, and anything else by which the unfortunate man might keep himself afloat until more effectual help could be rendered.

"My God! my God!" repeated the captain, who began to feel that his presentiments would be fatally realized.

The man who had fallen overboard was Jean—his beloved Jean—his mother's pride—the heir and only hope of his ancient family.

“My God! my God! have mercy on us. Oh holy Mary, Our Lady of Armor, save him! oh, save my child,” cried the distracted parent.

Meantime the helm had been put about by his orders, and some intrepid men immediately threw themselves into the long boat, which they had launched into the sea, notwithstanding the fury of the tempest. Rowing with all their might, they rapidly neared the spot where they hoped still to find the unfortunate Jean. The night was dark and rainy; a lantern—placed in front of the boat, which seemed to shoot along the water like an arrow in the air—shewed the drowning man that they were coming to his rescue. The crew on board followed the boat with looks of deep anxiety, as its feeble light disappeared in the depths of the sea, and appeared again on the foamy crest of the waves.

But, alas! all was in vain: Jean, lying senseless on a floating spar, was unable to cry out, and in the thick darkness of the night it was impossible for the boat to discover him. The grief of the unhappy father was terrible at first; but he was sublime in his resignation. The chaplain, trying to inspire him with hopes which he hardly dared to entertain himself, reminded him at the same time of his duties as a Christian, and as the captain of the ship. His pale face, his haggard looks, revealed the convulsive struggle of his soul: at last, raising his eyes to heaven, in a broken voice he exclaimed—“May the holy will of God be done!”

All the crew, while sympathising with the father, felt deeply for the loss of the son; for they loved Jean, that youth so fair, so mild, so good,—the angel and the soul of the frigate.

It is especially in misfortune that the faith of a Breton sailor manifests itself in all its strength. Taught from the cradle that sorrows for the soul, and suffering for the body, are the sad heritage of humanity, he never forgot to ascribe the merit of the sacrifice to Him Who has made all moral and physical suffering either to serve as a chastisement for our sins, or to serve as a trial for the christian's courage, and so to prepare him for his final destiny.

One morning, having found in the dregs of his cup of bitterness the secret of resignation, which brings us nearer to God, Captain Kerouarbequem went down into the chaplain's cabin and said to him:

"Sir, my son is dead, or is now floating at the mercy of the waves, and under the eye of God: in either case he needs our prayers—for the repose of his soul, if already passed from this world—or for his preservation from death, if, as I scarce dare hope, the tempest may still have left him alive."

"In either case, captain, a prayer agreeable to God will be effectual for the end for which it is offered up. I am ready to join you, with my whole heart, in this intention."

"From my childhood," said the captain, "I have had the greatest confidence in the intercession of *Notre Dame de l'Armor*."

"This confidence, which I have also," rejoined the chaplain, "is justified by almost daily proofs of the powerful aid of the Mother of our Saviour."

"It is she," said the Captain, "my mother used to tell me, when, on a tempestuous night, she trembled and prayed for the life of her husband—'it is *Notre Dame de l'Armor* who sends her beautiful angels to help those who are in danger, to bring them to the ports of Brittany, or to carry their souls to heaven, folded in their wings. Never forget her,' said my mother, joining her hands and kneeling

before our holy Mother's image,—and I have never forgotten her, and that is why, reverend sir, I come to you now, to make a vow to go bare-foot and head uncovered to the chapel of Notre Dame de l'Armor, from whatever place my vessel shall arrive at, for the repose of the soul of my poor Jean, or for his deliverance from the waves, if still alive."

"I cannot but approve of your pious design, captain."

"Besides that, reverend sir, I propose to begin a novena to day, at the end of which I wish to receive the Holy Communion, if you judge me worthy."

"We will do so together, if you please, captain."

"We will all do so!" cried the mate, who had been present at this affecting conversation, "and I think that in thus speaking I am the faithful interpreter of the sentiments of all our brave crew."

The men willingly ratified the engagement thus made in their name.

The novena consisted, first of all, in assisting at the holy sacrifice of the Mass for nine days, and the recital, morning and evening, of the "*Ave Maris Stella*," the "*Exaudiat*," and some litanies, before which they repeated the simple Breton invocation:

"Watch over us, *Notre Dame de l'Armor*, in all dangers, for our frigate is very small, and God's ocean is very great."

That same day all the crew, with the officers at their head, began, under the chaplain's direction; the proposed novena.

When the ninth day had arrived, the captain, the officers, and nearly all the crew, united in heart and intention, received communion together. The chaplain, who lived to ninety years of age, used afterwards to say that it was the happiest day he ever remembered.

Meanwhile the frigate, favoured by a pleasant

breeze, approached rapidly towards the French shore, eluding the vigilance of the corsair vessels, which at that time infested our coasts. Still sad, but piously resigned, Captain Kerouarbequem cast anchor at last in the harbour of Brest on a beautiful morning in the month of June.

On his arrival, he wrote a respectful letter to the king, requesting a month's leave, which was granted to him, along with the cross of St. Louis, which was sent to him at the same time. The next day, after having assisted at the head of his crew at a last mass said by the chaplain, he went bravely on his way, with head and feet bare, to perform his vow to "Notre Dame de l'Armor."

The distance from Brest to L'Armor is considerable, and the June sun is very hot, but the courageous captain, supported by the conviction that he was performing a solemn duty, lost no time in setting about his long pilgrimage. He only stopped one night in order to recruit his strength by a little repose. His impatience to arrive at St. Armor gave him wings. At last one evening, worn out with hunger and fatigue, for he fasted by way of penance, he caught a glimpse of the chapel, so dear to the heart of every Breton sailor. Oh, how his heart beat at the sight of the cross which had protected the days of his childhood: he was about to see his paternal home; the cemetery where those of his ancestors reposed whom the ocean had not engulfed; he was about to rejoin his faithful spouse. But what should he answer her, when seeing him return alone she should say, "where is our son?"

With his mind occupied with these various thoughts he knelt down in the humble chapel at the foot of the cross, and before the venerated image of Notre Dame l'Armor. It was late. The

night was advanced, and threw its confused shade over every object; a few steps from him he perceived a person kneeling upon the stone, as if in prayer, whose attitude attracted his attention.

"No doubt he is, like myself, a poor sailor, fulfilling a promise made to our holy patroness—a father, perhaps, who may have lost a son during the voyage, or a son who may have lost his father;" and by an instinctive movement he drew nearer to him. The sorrow as well as the prayer of two, thought he, is more pleasing to God.

At that moment the lamp of the sanctuary lighted up the face of the sailor, and of the young man whom he approached. At the same moment a sudden cry escaped from both. "My father!"—"My son!" Before God, and before the image of his august Mother, father and son in each other's arms laughed and wept at the same time from joy and happiness.

The captain had recovered his beloved child; it was, indeed, Jean whom he pressed to his heart; his Jean, whom he had given up as lost for ever; his Jean now restored to his affection, to the hope of his old age.

Never were more heartfelt thanksgivings offered up in Notre Dame de l'Armor. The father and son formed but one heart and soul before her.

Madame Kerouarbequem learned at the same time the story of her son's misfortune and of his rescue. Jean told it, without leaving out a single detail; the mysterious warning his angel guardian had given him in a dream; his falling into the sea; his agony during two hours which he passed on a buoy; his confidence in God and in Notre Dame de l'Armor; his fervent prayers; his vow to our Lady; and last of all, his rescue by an American vessel. In their delight the father and mother

could not look enough at their beloved Jean, and could not embrace him too often. The captain immediately wrote, and told the good chaplain of the happy news, who communicated it to the officers and crew of the frigate.

The month's leave was rapidly passing, and was soon to be followed by the regrets of parting. The day was approaching when Kerouarbequem would be obliged to rejoin his ship. But the king, when he heard of what had passed, gave him leave to stay two months longer, and gave him at the same time notice of further advancement in the service.

One evening when the father and son were walking on the sea-shore the captain, resuming the conversation which they had begun on board ship, said to Jean—

“ Well, my child, what do you think of the sea now ? ”

“ I think that the sea is beautiful, and that God is very good,” said he.

“ The warning we have received, child,” replied the captain, after a moment's silence, “ has changed my ideas, or at least partially so. Remain a poet upon land if you wish, since the poetry of the sea only smiles at you in the distance. But before I go I should like to see you married.”

Jean was silent.

“ Would you dislike marriage, my son ? ”

“ My father, your will is mine.”

“ Enough.”

Six weeks afterwards Jean married a young and virtuous Bretonne of his own choice.

His father continued in his maritime career with great success to a good old age, when he saw his name replaced on the roll of the French navy by that of his grandson, a handsome boy of seventeen years of age.

THE YOUNG SOLDIER:

TALES OF THE LATER FRENCH REVOLUTIONS.

OUR story opens in Paris, in the year 1848, a short time before the critical days of June. At this juncture our governors may be said to have saved the cause of order by making use of the elements of disorder. The recruits, which were then gathered from the lowest grades of the population of Paris, formed into bands, under the name of the "gardes mobiles," and thus converted into soldiers, were destined, in fact, to save France, perhaps even Europe, from anarchy. Who can say what would have happened had not this guard, taking the initiative of an heroic resistance, extinguished in its blood the revolutionary torch, which, beginning from Paris, would have gone the round of the continent, kindled and nourished everywhere by the breath of turbulent passions? Throughout all Paris the military uniform had replaced the "blouses" of those noisy "gamins" who had been the terror of the citizens, the disturbers of the peace and quiet of respectable families, and the vanguard of every disturbance. The battalions of this youthful guard had been formed as if by enchantment, and they submitted themselves readily to the yoke of discipline, under the direction of those experienced old soldiers who were called to the difficult duty of training and commanding them. Having been all their lives free as the birds of the air, these careless frequenters of the boulevards, these idlers of the *barrières*, were found to yield themselves without resistance to the mathematical rules of military discipline. The formation of this young militia alarmed at first the citizens of

Paris, the friends of peace and quiet, who thought they saw in the formation of twenty-four battalions, organised on the barricades of February, elements essentially revolutionary and subversive of all order. But afterwards these worthy people, finding that the "Mobile" was specially destined for the defence of families, and the preservation of the peace, were not long in abandoning their suspicions.

A young lady, who like others, had at first trembled at the very name of a "Garde Mobile," said to us one day—"Do you know that these 'Mobiles' are as worthy of praise as the knights of the middle ages, the gallant protectors of the widow and the orphan." And to give more weight to this praise, she related the following anecdote.

"Wishing to pay a visit to the workmen of the national 'ateliers,' I went one day in a carriage to the 'Champ de Mars,' first of all having taken care to efface, in compliance with the new decree of the Republic, the armorial bearings which recalled the name of one who, in his position in the old military aristocracy, had once rendered some service to our country. The workmen in the 'Champ de Mars' were at recreation; some playing games, others reading the newspaper, others resting themselves on the green turf. They doubtless took me for a disguised duchess, for they immediately threw themselves on my carriage, crying out, 'down with the aristocrats.' They were even preparing to make me come out, when some of the Garde Mobile, who luckily for me were loitering about in that quarter, took up my defence with great vigour, and gave my coachman time to go on at a gallop till he was again on the high road. For myself, I much regret not having had time to thank my brave deliverer."

One evening two of the Garde Mobile, passing through the street of the Faubourg St. Honoré,

observed several men singing in a loud voice, as if intoxicated. These men were standing before the door of a house, and insulting, by words and gestures, some young women whose white gentle hands had not been sufficiently quick in illuminating, in honour of the planting of a tree of liberty in the neighbourhood. Armed with stones, they were preparing to break the panes of the windows, when one of the Garde Mobile, whose physical strength was equal to his moral courage, came up to the ringleader, and said—

“You are then very fond of lights?”

“Yes,” replied the other, “and especially those that the aristocracy contribute to illuminating for the democratic and social Republic.”

“Very well, my friend, I am going to show you thirty-six candles, without your having to give a single sous to the grocer.” And suiting the action to the word, he bestowed on him as vigorous a blow on the face as ever was given by man’s fist.

One evening, in a night dark as the bottom of an ink-bottle, a patrol of the young guard, commanded by a well known officer, found himself all at once among a group of noisy rioters, who had formed a plan to break the street lamps. To stop them, and collar them, was but the affair of a moment. The chief of the patrol giving the example, seized hold of the leader of this disturbance, whom he directly recognised as his own father. In this position, painfully divided between the sentiments of filial affection and the claims of military duty, what was he to do? what could he do? It was a most delicate question. He quickly solved it, however, with a wisdom worthy of Solomon, as you shall see.

“How, wretch,” said his father to him, “do you dare thus to lift your hand against your own parent? Is this the use of all the money I paid to your

school to teach you the commandment, 'Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother?'"

"My father," replied the commanding officer, putting the back of his hand across his red cap—"my father, I honour you; I respect you more than I can tell you. But in the present curious times, as the commands of the law stand in the way of my following the dictates of my heart, I am obliged for the next quarter of an hour not to know you as my father. You must follow me."

All that this young guard could do in order to reconcile the duties of a son and of a soldier, was to solicit permission of the general to share the captivity of his father; a favour which was readily granted, and for which he testified his gratitude.

But to proceed with our main story.

One of the guard meeting, on a beautiful May morning, a "Christian Brother" on the parade of the "Invalides," saluted him three times with a most perfect imitation of the braying of an ass. Brother James, for that was the name of this excellent friend of the children of the people, was not a man to allow his religious habit to be insulted without notice—"My young friend," said he, addressing the Garde Mobile, "you have an admirable voice, I must allow; a splendid talent for society; but you have a bad heart."

"I-au! i-au! i-au!" replied the other, in the same tone, thus aggravating his first fault by a premeditated repetition.

"That is just it," replied Brother James; "you speak to perfection the language which is no doubt most familiar to you. But for myself, who do not possess the gift of inspiration, I do not pretend to understand it. Be so good as to speak French to me if you wish me to answer you."

The Garde Mobile, who had swallowed rather

copious libations in honour of Bacchus, translated his stupid cry into accusations of ignorance and idleness against the Brothers.

"So you seem to think," replied the latter, "that the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine are all idle and ignorant men."

"I think so; and I say that they are every one of them good-for-nothings."

"You would be quite right, if the thousands of children whom they instruct and bring up in the lessons of virtue profited by them as little as you appear to have done."

"They have never given me any lessons at all, Monsieur Ignoramus."

"I should have guessed as much. But as every one is capable of receiving a lesson, I mean now to give you one."

"I should not know what to do with it . . . you would only be losing your time."

"But you will not lose your money, for we give all our lessons free of cost for the love of God. Learn, then, my young friend, that when one has the honour of bearing, as you have, a sabre at one side, an insult gratuitously addressed to a man who has no other means of defence than the dignity of his character, is an act of *cowardice*. What would you think of me, if taking off this black dress, the humble uniform of our order, I appeared before you in all the strength of a man in the prime of life? what would you think of me if I were to go in the dress of a grenadier, of a dragoon, or of a sailor, and seize the hand of an old man and squeeze it as I do yours now?"

Brother James had, in fact, taken his hand, and squeezed it as in an iron vice, extracting from the "garde" a cry of anguish and deprecation.

"I should then be truly guilty, comrade, and you would be right in accusing me of cowardice." . . .

"And you have been *cowardly* and ill-behaved with regard to me, not in trying to crush my hand in yours—you could not have done so, for you are only a child; but in trying to break my heart by insults and accusations which are undeserved. Notwithstanding that I am endowed with sufficient bodily strength not to fear any attack; by the side of you I am but as an old man, more bound by the peaceful obligations of my rule than a man of eighty would be by the burden of years. You have insulted me, young man, and nevertheless I offer you my hand; not to give you again another proof of my strength, but to offer you this time a token of friendship and reconciliation. Will you take it?"

There was so much sweetness, and at the same time so much energy and determination in the brother's voice, that the "Garde Mobile" accepted the hand which he so generously held out to him, and said, "Forgive me, brother. I acknowledge my faults, and I promise you that for the future I will profit by the lesson I have just received."

"I forgive you, on one condition."

"I accept it beforehand."

"On condition that you come and see me to-morrow, and at any other time when your duties and the pleasure of visiting a friend will allow you to come."

"Agreed."

"And now, my friend, what is your name?"

"Tourtereau." (*Turtle-dove.*)

"A very pretty name, in truth; with such a name one ought only to *coo*, and never to *bray*: don't you think so too?"

"Enough, brother; I have asked your pardon."

"That is true; we will speak no more of it. There, my young friend, is my card; it is not enamelled and embossed, but my name and my address are there: that is all that is needed—read it."

Tourtereau took the card, and rolled it between his fingers with a stupid look, and without giving him any answer.

"Read on, my man."

"I should very much like to do so, brother, but—but I cannot"—

"What hinders you?"

"My foolish ignorance. I do not know how to read, and wretch that I am, I dared to call you an 'ignoramus!'"

"This word only becomes an insult by the meaning given to it; but interpreted in another way, it signifies the friend, the teacher of the ignorant. Come and see me, I repeat; come every day, and before a month is past you will know how to read as well as any one."

"Good God, is it possible?"

"I promise you. You will see."

"To-morrow, then, brother?"

"To-morrow, comrade."

At the moment when the Christian Brother and the Garde Mobile, quite reconciled with each other, were shaking hands, an ass who was drawing the cart of a seller of vegetables began to bray with all its might.

"Decidedly that is not a pretty noise," said Tourtereau, and then he added: "you may be sure, brother, that this time he is addressing himself to *asses*."

Brother James did not live at that time in the principal house of the brothers of the Christian doctrine, but in the Rue de Babylone, about a hundred yards distant from the quarters occupied by

Tourtereau's battalion. The "garde," faithful to his promise, came at the hour appointed to the brother's apartments.

"Before taking our first reading lesson, my friend," said brother James, "I wish to refute two mistakes under which many people labour in regard to the poor religious of the 'Christian Doctrine.' In the eyes of the world, which only judges of things by appearance, and is nearly always in error, we are both idle and ignorant. As to the first, however, we rise with the sun in the summer, and are up long before daylight in winter; and the whole of the day, from morning until night, we consecrate to the instruction of poor children. The time allowed for meals, the nourishment of the body, and for prayer, the nourishment of the soul, is the only intermission allowed us. Several times in the week we go to visit the poor, the sick, and the prisoners. Our-selves the children of people—we only live among the people, and for the good of the people. Subject to rule and order, like yourself, we constantly bend our will to that of our superiors, who in their turn are bound to the observance of the common law of our order. Our life, far from being a life of idleness, is one of constant labour, the description of which is comprised in one word—*abnegation*.

"So much for the first accusation: as for the second, the unanswerable logic of facts plainly proves that we are not ignorant any more than we are idle. Our knowledge is limited by our duty. Our object is not to furnish subjects for the polytechnic school or for the crowns of the academy; it is to make honest steady workmen and good and loyal citizens; to teach our pupils how to read, to write, to cypher, even to draw; there is the end of our humble efforts; we complete this elementary instruction by the knowledge of religion, which is the key to all else.

Without that knowledge, which teaches man to know, love, and serve God, and to fulfil the great end of his being, the most learned in the world would be the most ignorant. We are neither Cuviers, nor Aragos, nor Chateaubriands, but it is true we are not for all that the ignoramuses they make us out to be. We call to witness the families of the poor, the children, and the workmen, who will perhaps tell you that we are of some use to them. We know little; but we know how to place our knowledge within the reach of every one's understanding; we do not aim too high or too far, but our aim is true. So much for an answer to the second accusation."

"As good as the first," replied Tourtereau. "I am fain to acknowledge it in all sincerity."

As brother James predicted, the "Garde Mobile," having a great desire to learn, and being as docile as a child, read fluently at the end of a month. He had not missed his master's lesson once during the whole time.

"Oh if I could now learn how to write," said he, "I should be the happiest man in my regiment!"

"You will be able to write before six weeks are over," said brother James, "if you apply yourself to it with as much zeal as you did to the other."

Six weeks afterwards Tourtereau wrote a very fair running hand.

"Now, if I could but learn how to calculate in some other way than on the end of my fingers," said he, "I should be a corporal before three weeks are over."

"Before three weeks you may be a corporal, if you wish, and if you continue your habits of application and zeal."

And as Tourtereau not only persevered, but redoubled his efforts, he learnt the first four rules of arithmetic in a fortnight.

The teacher and his scholar had achieved these wonderful results in spite of the interruption which the battle of June caused in their studies. Tourtereau had signalized himself above all the other young men of his battalion. None had showed more courage and zeal in the cause of order and defence of society, so gravely menaced in the rights of families and property.

As he had desired, he received the appointment of corporal, and soon after changed it for that of sergeant. Tourtereau knew now how to read, write, and cypher. Still his work was by no means complete, for he hardly knew the A B C of his religion. Brother James, who had conceived a great affection for his young pupil, willingly pursued the course of his instructions upon this, the most important by far of all the subjects which had hitherto engaged him.

We need not follow in detail all the steps by which the good brother proceeded in the holy work of bringing the strayed sheep to the fold of Christ; suffice it to say, that the blessing of God was not wanting to his efforts and his prayers, and that no long time elapsed before the young soldier made his general confession with all the marks of a deep and genuine repentance. He received Holy Communion on the following Sunday, and was distinguished ever after for the regular performance of his Christian duties. He continued to study the Catechism, that epitome of all christian knowledge and practice; and as he could now read fluently, he spent much of his time in the perusal of useful and improving books. One day that the religious and the soldier were walking arm in arm, like old friends, under the trees of the

esplanade, where a few months before they had met,—one as an insulter and the other as insulted,—brother James said to Tourtereau, “The dealings of God are so incomprehensible that often the conversion of a man is occasioned by some sin on his part. The greatest results, too, proceed sometimes under God from the most trivial causes. You owe to an insulting and stupid cry the knowledge which you have acquired, as well as the ‘insignia’ of your uniform. But I have a tale to relate to you, *a propos* to what I have been saying, and if you will sit down with me on this bench you shall hear what may perhaps interest you a little.” They sat down, and brother James thus proceeded:—

“A long time ago, *i. e.* in 1830, a few months before the Revolution of July, a young naval officer, wearing his uniform with pride, and on the uniform the cross of the Legion of Honour gained at the battle of Navarino, was travelling by the diligence, intending to pass a month at Lyons, out of the three months’ leave of absence which he had obtained. This young man, having been brought up in the school then called ‘Liberalism,’ boasted of a profound indifference for the things of religion. In a word, he was as bad a Christian as he believed himself a good sailor.

“The diligence in which he was travelling was quite full, and a priest sat in one corner reading his breviary, indifferent to the general conversation, which was about the politics of the day.

“‘What may you be reading so attentively, sir?’ said the young officer to the priest.

“‘I am reading, sir, as you perceive, my office,’ turning the page of the book towards him.

“‘The office of Jesuits and fools,’ rejoined the lieutenant.

“The priest opposed only the silence of contempt to this direct insult.

“The officer then drawing from his pocket a volume of Beranger, began reading, in an undertone, an anti-religious, and at that time unhappily popular song, and when he had finished the last verse he said, addressing himself afresh to the ecclesiastic and holding up to him his volume of songs—‘Here is a breviary, which is worth all yours, Monsieur l’Abbé; what think you?’

“‘I thiuk, sir, that it is very shameful of a young man to insult an inoffensive old man; above all a priest, who has no defence but his sacred habit.’

“The sailor was going to answer, when instantly a middle-aged gentleman took up the cause of the priest, and said to the lieutenant, ‘I must confess, sir, that I was of the same opinion as Monsieur l’Abbé; your conduct is that of a person devoid of heart and feeling.’

“‘What is it you said, sir?’ replied the sailor, pretending not to have heard.

“The stranger repeated his words with additional emphasis.

“‘Ah! I can see you are yourself one of the same tribe—a Father Jesuit, disguised, no doubt.’

“‘I am an honest man, who has never yet allowed a priest, a woman, or a child to be insulted with impunity: do you understand me, sir?’

“‘A Don Quixote, perhaps; a redresser of evils and wrongs—a chastiser——’

“‘Yes, sir, of impertinent people——’

“‘Sir,’ interrupted the sailor, raising his voice, ‘you have already gone too far. Woe betide him who provokes me. We shall meet again.’

“‘I am quite prepared, young man,’ was the calm reply of the other.’

"At this stage of the affair the conductor's voice was heard crying, 'Valence, gentlemen; you have an hour here for dinner.'

"The travellers immediately alighted, and went into the *salle-à-manger*. The priest alone remained in the diligence, distressed by the scene of which he had been the involuntary cause.

"The redresser of wrongs and the young officer found themselves accidentally next each other. The one was perfectly calm, the face of the other was still purple with rage. It so happened that the hot rays of the sun fell directly upon the stranger's face, and calling the waiter, he desired him to shut the blinds on the side of the window on which the sun was shining.

"No sooner was that done than the officer cried out, 'Ho, we are in darkness here: waiter, open that shutter, if you please.'

"'Yes, sir,' replied the waiter, who hastened to obey the command.

"'One is almost blinded,' said the unknown, directly. 'Waiter, shut that shutter, please.'

"'Yes, sir,' replied the waiter.

"Upon this the enraged lieutenant, getting up from the table, went himself towards the window, and opened again the unfortunate shutter which had thus become an apple of discord.

"The stranger made no further remark, but said quietly to the waiter:—

"'Go down to the court-yard, if you please, and bring me up a green umbrella with an ivory handle, which you will find in the strap of the diligence above the seat No. 2.'

"The waiter speedily returned with the desired article.

"The stranger opened it, and passed the handle

under the turned-up collar of his great coat. He was just carving a fowl.

“ ‘Will you allow me, Madame,’ said he, when he had finished this operation—‘will you allow me to send you this wing;’ and turning rather to the left to transfer it to its destination, he gave his neighbour the lieutenant a violent knock on the head with the umbrella.

“ ‘I beg a thousand pardons, sir,’ said he, ‘but I think you will allow that the sun is very uncomfortable.’

“ ‘Sir, shall I send you this leg of a fowl?’ added he, accompanying this proposal with a second blow on the head of his neighbour with the umbrella. ‘Once more I beg pardon, sir, but really the sun begins to be quite unbearable.’

“ ‘Shall I send you this other wing, madam?’—A third blow with the umbrella followed, and fresh excuses were again offered with the most marked attention.

“ ‘Shall I offer *you*, Monsieur Lieutenant, this morsel,’ and without waiting for an answer, he gave him a fourth blow with the umbrella, followed, as usual, by excuses and recriminations against the sun, placing at the same time the piece of the fowl on his plate. This scene, enacted with such imperturbable coolness, had become so thoroughly comic and absurd, that the amazed officer could scarcely prevent himself from joining in the general laugh. Nevertheless, the last blow had given the finishing stroke, and the officer immediately broke out.

“ ‘Excellent! well done, on my faith,’ said he, disguising his increasing rage. ‘And now, sir, when shall I have the honour of the proposed meeting? You are going to Lyons, I believe. At what hotel do you put up?’

“ ‘At the Hotel du General.’

“ ‘To-morrow morning, then, I shall have the honour of paying you a visit.’

“ ‘As you please.’

“ ‘For whom shall I have the honour of asking?’

“ ‘Monsieur Paultre.’

“ ‘Enough.’

“ At that moment the conductor, standing at the door of the hotel, called out, ‘Mount, gentlemen, if you please.’

“ The voice of the conductor was, in those days, what the railway bell is now-a-days.

“ The *salle-à-manger* was evacuated in the twinkling of an eye, and the diligence, drawn by five sturdy horses, rolled rapidly on towards the city of Lyons.

“ The next morning the lieutenant presented himself at the Hotel du General, and asked for Monsieur Paultre.

“ ‘He is not at home,’ said the porter, ‘but he begged me to give you this note.’

“ He opened it, and read :—

“ ‘Sir,—It will be impossible for me to receive you to-day ; but if, as I suppose, you still desire to see me, you will find me to-morrow at twelve o’clock precisely on the Place de Bellecour, opposite the equestrian statue of Louis XIV.—PAULTRE.’

“ The lieutenant arrived at the Place de Bellecour at the appointed time, accompanied by the friends who were to act as seconds. The whole troops of the town were under arms, to be received by the commanding general of the division. Precisely as twelve o’clock sounded from the church ‘De la Charité,’ a brilliant military staff emerged from the Rue Boissac. The drums beat the signal. The music began to play, and the troops presented arms to the general, who was advancing at a gallop in front of

the regiment, now ranged in order of battle. By favour of his naval uniform the lieutenant was able to get very near the troops, and was impatiently awaiting his adversary's arrival, who he imagined was probably hindered from reaching him in the crowd. While he stood in an attitude of expectation, he observed the commanding-general place himself before the equestrian statue, and then heard him say, in a voice which he at once recognised as that of his fellow-traveller, 'I am very sorry at having been obliged to keep you waiting, sir, but you know that duty must have the precedence. In twenty minutes I shall be at your service at the quarters of the division in the Rue Boissac.'

"The officer, completely thunderstruck, bowed, not knowing exactly what to do or say. He was in a most awkward position; for it was quite evident that in the scene of the diligence and the hotel he had acted the part of an aggressor, and the injured person being invested with one of the highest military titles, could not, according to etiquette, measure swords with an inferior. On the other hand, he would have been very glad to have dispensed with the promised visit, but as he had just been reminded of it by the general himself, he felt that his absence would only have been an additional difficulty; he therefore resigned himself to his fate, and said, 'General, I place myself at your discretion.'

" 'So far well,' replied the general; 'do you still persist in your sanguinary intentions?'

" 'I was deceived, general!'

" 'In taking me for a poor civilian, eh?'

" 'In forgetting the respect which I owed to a man invested with a character so sacred, and in disdaining the counsels of justice and reason. I beg you to receive my heartfelt apologies.'

“‘I am glad of it, young man ; there is more real glory in making a frank avowal of one’s faults than in resorting to arms.’

“‘I acknowledge it, general, and I regret also not being able to make reparation to the venerable priest whom I insulted.’

“‘You speak as a noble young man. I am happy to have been able to have divined your intention so well as to ask, as I have done, l’Abbé Baron, vicar-general of the diocese of Lyons, to breakfast with us. But here he comes.—You come, Monsieur l’Abbé, just in time to witness the noble reparation which our young lieutenant desires to make for his conduct yesterday. ‘Yes, Monsieur l’Abbé,’ added the lieutenant, ‘it is in all humility of heart that I beg you to accept the sincere expression of my regret and of my repentance.’

“L’Abbé Baron held out his hand to him affectionately, saying ‘oh, think no more of it ; I had already forgotten all.’

“‘And now, my young friend, for our *meeting*,’ continued the general, taking the lieutenant’s hand, ‘but as I have the choice of ground and of arms, I select for the place the *salle-à-manger*, and for arms a knife and fork, for I declare that I am exceedingly hungry.’

“Arrived at the *salle-à-manger*, the foes of the day before, thus reconciled and made friends, sat down at the same table, when all traces of past differences were speedily obliterated.

“All at once a ray of the sun shone full in the lieutenant’s face.

“‘Shall I offer you my umbrella?’ said the general, laughingly. ‘You refuse it? Well, in that case, waiter, be so kind as to shut the shutters, for the sun is somewhat too powerful.’

“‘Certainly, general ; on every point you have

the advantage of me,' replied the sailor, equally good-humouredly.

" 'Do you know who that general was?' asked brother James of Tourtereau, who had been listening to his tale with the utmost avidity.

" 'It was the General Paultre de Lamotte.'

" 'And do you know who the lieutenant was?'

" 'It was *myself*.'

" 'You!' exclaimed Tourtereau in astonishment.

" 'Yes, me. Six months after this event, tired of service, and desirous to work out my salvation in a surer way than at sea, I changed my sailor's uniform for that of this order, and my title of lieutenant for that of Brother *Ignoramus*.'

" During this conversation darkness had come on; on one side the drum, and on the other the clocks were sounding the hour for retiring. Brother James and Tourtereau parted, each going to his respective quarters. Brother James is now what he was yesterday, and will be to-morrow—the friend of the children of the people. Tourtereau having enlisted in a regiment of the line, won his captain's 'epaulettes' under the walls of Sebastopol."

ANDREW BRAVEALL.

Not far from the Bridge of Clay, one of the seven wonders of Dauphiné, and at the foot of those mountains whose picturesque blue summits are so dear to artists, our hero was born in the year of grace 1804, on a merry Shrove Tuesday. His father, although not rich, was in circumstances sufficiently easy to content his moderate desires. A white house standing in the midst of an orchard, like a linnet's nest in a thicket, served for his abode; close by was a farm, and in the distance were fields which owed their yearly fertility to a tillage which might well have served as a model. Four cart-horses or mules in the stables, a dozen heifers in the stalls, and some bank shares, constituted the fortune of Andrew's family; a family honoured and respected throughout the whole neighbourhood. Andrew's father was a thoroughly honest man in the esteem of the world, a Christian too in his faith, though not so attentive to the practice of religion as he might have been; careless from habit, however, more than from settled design; his wife was a pious woman, whom he justly looked upon as the guardian angel of his house. Madame Clotilde Rambaud might indeed have passed for an angel upon earth, for her heart seemed to be the sanctuary of every virtue. A faithful wife, a good mother, an excellent housekeeper, Clotilde was the pride and joy of the family, just as George the eldest son, and little Andrew, were the delight of her maternal heart.

Every day Père Rambaud endeavoured to develop the physical strength of his children, in order to make them robust and vigorous men. Every day, too, their mother tried to form their character, in order to make them virtuous men and good Chris-

tians. When the father, who had retired from the navy in the prime of life, had excited the curiosity, and won the attention of his children by his interesting sea stories, and had told them that there was not in the world a nobler calling than a mariner's, the mother completed his tales by proving, with the eloquent logic of facts, that good Christians always made the best sailors. If, to give weight to her assertion, she asked her husband's opinion, he affirmed that "sailors were the best of Christians, because nothing in the world could give men such an idea of the grandeur and immensity of God as the sight of the sea." "He whose pure soul can present itself without fear before God," said Madame Rambaud, "fears not death, and often welcomes it even with love; true strength, true courage, is always to be found in the peace of a good conscience. What do you think, Rambaud?"

"I think you are right. If now and then one finds a brave man among wicked and good-for-nothing men, one never finds a coward among those that fear God. I knew a sailor who never opened his mouth but to blaspheme God. Well, this man, whom his comrades feared on account of his physical strength and wild character, was weaker at heart than a baby in arms; he would toss his head disdainfully at the sight of a crucifix, but he would grow pale and bend it when he heard the hissing of a cannon-ball passing through the rigging. At Navarino, pretending to be suddenly attacked by indisposition, he abandoned his fighting post three times during an hour, leaving behind him sad traces of his lack of courage. At the same battle of Navarino, a young ensign, whom the old hands called a chicken-hearted choir boy, behaved like a lion; in the heat of the battle he was found at the most perilous posts. At the first cannon-shot he knelt

down upon the deck, but he rose brave as a Jean Bart. The secret of heroism is often to be found in prayer."

"The secret of goodness is always to be found there," added Madame Rambaud. "Let us pray, then, my children—let us pray to God, let us pray, also, to his august Mother, the Star of mariners and the protectress of little children!" Accordingly, joining their hands before a crucifix, ornamented by a blest palm, she thus terminated these familiar conversations, which took place generally of an evening. After this pious exercise, the children, tired by the sports of the day, sought in sleep strength for the sports of the morrow. Madame Clotilde then read for her husband and herself a chapter of the history of the French navy, and a chapter of the lives of the Saints. The retired sailor listened to both with equal attention, smoking turn by turn his long and his short pipe.

The nature of children is like that of the soil, more or less adapted to receive the seed which produces the fertile harvest, the word which makes young souls fruitful for good. George, who was ten years old, thrilled with emotion at the pious instructions of his mother; while Andrew's heart bounded at the warlike stories of his father. The former, whose character was gentle and industrious, promised to be one day the perfect counterpart of the pious woman who had so well known the way to his heart; the latter, who was eight years old, was of an ardent and impetuous nature, and foreshadowed by instincts opposed to those of his brother, the active and stirring part which he desired to play in life. George, attentive and studious, was the schoolmaster's pride, who quoted him as a model in every thing; Andrew, who played truant from morning till night, was the terror

of the whole parish. Endowed with a courage and strength unusual at his age, he devoted himself to the exercises of the body rather than to the studies of the intellect. The bird's nests were never mysteriously or high enough perched, but that he managed to get at them; the fruits of the orchards in autumn, the fresh eggs of the poulterer in spring, the hens of the neighbours at all seasons, excited his instincts of conquest, and often became his property by what he called the right of conquest and of plunder. Inaccessible to the fear of punishment, he endured with a Spartan stoicism the punishments which befell him, whenever, caught in the fact, he became in his turn the accidental prey of one stronger than himself. Whether beating others, or beaten by others, Andrew, whom his comrades surnamed Braveall, was loved by every body, and his freaks were forgiven in consideration of the goodness of his heart, and of the ingenuity they displayed. One day, when he had been foraging in the hen-house of a neighbour's wife, and she had menaced him with the anger of her husband:—"It isn't I that have taken your fowls, mother," said he.

"What, you little rogue," replied she, "it isn't you."

"No, it isn't I."

"It is, perhaps, our grey ass?"

"You are right, it is she; and I can prove it to you before witnesses. Do you wish it?"

"Certainly."

"Very well; come with me." Then, accompanied by some chosen persons to serve as arbiters in the dispute, he led them to an old tower where it was said a sorcerer came to deliver his oracles. The spot was admirably adapted for the exploits of witchcraft. When there, the young marauder paused a moment,

and then shouted—"In the name of truth, sorcerer, I invoke thee—answer me! Who took the fowls of mother Jélagobe? Was it I or the ass?"

A mysterious voice answered immediately—"The ass."

The trial was renewed three times with the same success, to the great amazement of the simple people, who seriously took the sound of an echo for the voice of a sorcerer, who had been long held in repute throughout all the country. A few months afterwards, however, Andrew completely reconciled himself with mother Jélagobe, by saving her only child, the little Louise, who had fallen accidentally into the rapid waters of the neighbouring river, at the risk of his own life.

One day, Andrew, who had just completed his fourteenth year, went to his father and mother, and said to them, with a gravity unusual to him:—"You know, my dear parents, how much I love you, and how happy I am with you. Since my birth your tenderness has provided for my daily wants; you have warmed me when I was cold; you have given me food when I was hungry; you have kissed away my tears when I wept. You, my dear mother, have taught me that I was created and sent into this world to love and serve God; you, my dear father, have taught me that I was sent upon earth also to love and to serve my country."

"But, in the name of wonder, what are you coming at with all this preamble?" cried Père Rambaud, emptying his pipe; whilst his wife concealed, with the corner of her handkerchief, a tear which had wandered from her eyelid.

"I wish to come at what I ought to have begun with, without any phrases; for I see I was not created and placed in the world to become a pedantic scholar, as our schoolmaster says. I wish to say to you

that, in spite of all the love I have for you, I have the intention of bidding you adieu for a time, in the hope that we may soon meet again."

"What, Andrew, you would leave us!" said Madame Rambaud, in a tone of voice which expressed a reproach.

"Yes, mother, with the sole object of putting into practice the lessons of my father. I wish to serve my country on board the king's vessels."

"But, my child, you are not old enough yet."

"Pierre Chalumeau, our neighbour's son, is younger than I, and yet it is now two years since he had the honour of being cabin-boy on board the Labrador. I wish to be a cabin-boy, like Pierre."

"A rolling stone gathers no moss," said Père Rambaud, glad to interpose a bad pun* between the satisfaction which his son's resolution gave him, and his secret desire to keep him still with him.

"A ship which rolls gathers glory and profit. Father, have you not often told me that the admiral's baton is often found amongst those who have worn the red belts of a simple sailor?"

"He is ambitious, the little rogue ——"

"Of doing what his father has done before him—of serving bravely his country."

"So you wish to leave us?"

"To return more worthy of you. I prefer being a good sailor at sea, to being a useless 'good-for-nothing on the cow's back,' as our comrades say."

Andrew replied with firmness to all the objections which were made to him, and ended by obtaining the consent he hoped for.

In turning over in his mind the names of his old comrades, Père Rambaud bethought him of the

* *Pierre* a stone, in French; *mousse* a cabin-boy.

harbour-master of Toulon, with whom he had been on intimate terms. He conjectured rightly that this officer would serve as a protector and counsellor to his son. Satisfied, therefore, on this point, he devoted the few days which remained for Andrew to spend at home, to give to the future sailor the first notions of his new profession.

The evening preceding Andrew's departure was grave and solemn. The whole family being united round the hearth, Père Rambaud thus addressed his son :—

“ My dear child, in a few hours you will be far from us ; but our thoughts will follow you every where and always. God grant, my child, that yours may be always with us ! In all the trials which await you, never forget your duty to your country ; but, above all, remember that you are a Christian. If I have pronounced before you, less frequently than your tender mother has done, the name of the sovereign Arbiter of our destinies, it is because I knew from my own experience the power of a mother's voice when speaking to her children. That voice, mark me, has echoes which never die away in a manly soul ! That voice, never silenced amidst the errors and agitations of life, is always heard again at the hour of death ! Above all, then, be a good Christian ; for, by being a good Christian, you will be a good patriot, a good sailor, a good son, a good comrade. Submit yourself to discipline, and you will do so more easily if you are faithful to the commandments of God. Honour and respect your superiors ; be conciliating and kind to your equals ; be just and gentle towards your inferiors ; be courageous in danger ; humble in success. Never on any occasion abuse either your strength or your superiority. Strength sustains rights, but it does not constitute them. Never let your conscience or your

reason be submitted to the fear of man. Worldly fear is the courage of fools and of cowards. When, on the deck of your vessel, you see before you any nuns or priests, take off your hat reverently before these holy women and those pious men, as before the most perfect models of virtue and of self-sacrifice. Never laugh at the ridicule which others cast upon them ; ridicule is the weapon of cowards. He who gives even secret approbation to ridicule, becomes an accomplice in its cowardliness if any one insults them in your presence."

"I will think of my mother, and then woe betide insulters !"

"Well said !" replied his father ; "but curb your just indignation, for duels—those outrages upon good taste—are gone by, and are not met with now-a-days, except in the wretched drivellings of a few philosophical and revolutionary papers. The good common sense of the people condemned them. But one word more, my son—listen well ! In all circumstances of your life, let them be happy or sad, remember that the Cross is a compass which infallibly conducts to the haven of salvation. Every man who, having the law of God in his heart, as well as the love of his neighbour, sails under full canvass on the sea of honour and virtue."

The next morning, Andrew Braveall, whose eyes were dim with tears though his heart was full of gladness, provided with a letter of recommendation for the harbour-master of Toulon, and with a belt, into which his fond mother had slipped ten new pieces of gold, quitted the white cottage which had witnessed the sports of his childhood ; the village spire, which more than once made him turn longingly back ; the young companions, whom he had so often thrashed, who now thought it an honour to conduct him as far as the confines of the beautiful

avenue which serves at once as the high-road and as a promenade to the city of Grenoble. Three days afterwards, he made an engagement to serve two years in the marines, under the direction of the harbour-master, who received him with the kindness of a father.

The *Cacique*, on board which Andrew had embarked, had been six weeks in the roads, when the captain received orders to transport some troops to Senegal, and from thence to cruise on the track of the Indian vessels. Andrew watched the signal of departure with enthusiasm, and was among the most eager to hoist and to spread the sails—he was at the beginning of his first campaign. Driven on quickly by a strong north-west wind, the *Cacique*, gliding along the waters like a swallow in the air, was soon far on her way towards the Straits of Gibraltar. The sun shone in all its splendour. Andrew Braveall's face was radiant with joy, and he would not have changed his position as a simple cabin-boy for that of Rothschild, when he found himself in the boundless horizon formed by the sea and sky, and could distinguish only the fantastic clouds gliding above his head, and the blue waves of the Mediterranean dancing beneath his feet. Six months of navigation sufficed to form the independent and impetuous nature of our young volunteer to the rude profession of a seaman. Always light and cheerful, but with an excellent heart, he submitted readily to the yoke of discipline. He was so well adapted to his calling, that he captivated, more and more every day, the affection of his superiors, by his aptitude and zeal in executing all the manœuvres which were intrusted to him. To see him when, at the word of command, he ran up the rigging, one would have said it was a squirrel springing among the branches

of a large tree. None knew better than he how to unfurl the sails or to row a boat.

When he was fifteen—nine months after his embarkation—Andrew was so much changed that his mother would not have recognised, in the robust, broad-shouldered boy—his complexion bronzed by the sun and the sea-breezes—the child, with rosy cheeks and light hair, who was her joy and her pride. It was a joyful day for Braveall when he passed from cabin-boy to midshipman. He then wrote these few lines to his father :—

“DEAR FATHER,—Your little Andrew is now nearly a man : I am in fact a midshipman. Faithful to your counsels, to your examples, and to your lessons, I have managed to win the esteem of my officers, the friendship of my comrades, and the satisfaction of my conscience. I never sulk over my work, and never have a cross look in trouble. A month ago I left the *Cacique* for the *Suffren*, a beautiful vessel of ninety guns. We have on board a venerable ecclesiastic ; his name is C——. He appears to me like a thorough sailor. I have seen him as calm in the middle of a storm as our curé at the altar on Easter-day. A true St. John Chrysostom in his talk, he is a St. Vincent de Paul in his charity. Nothing can surpass his zeal in relieving the sick when any disease breaks out on board our vessel. If it were not for his noble masculine face, which only wants a pair of moustaches, one would take his black dress directly for that of a Sister of Charity. The sight of him alone, when he looks at me, reminds me of my mother’s teaching. I say this to prove to you that I have not forgotten what you said to me on the eve of my departure—I mean, that good Christians make good sailors. Adieu, dear father ! kiss dear mother on both cheeks, as also my

brother George.—Your affectionate and respectful son,

ANDREW,

Midshipman on board the Suffren."

Andrew could not have signed himself more triumphantly a Ruyter, a Tromp, or a Tourville, than by this simple title of midshipman. Two years later the boy of the Dauphiné mountains had grown into a man; seamen grow fast amongst storms and tempests. More than once his thoughts, regardless of time and space, carried him back to the humble village which had protected his childhood, and each time with an eager desire to see it again. But, as Andrew grew older, he had become ambitious. "I will not return to my country until I wear a good mark on my breast—a mark tied with a bit of ribbon, I don't care what colour. Noble and good actions will do as well with one colour as with another." The sooner to obtain the recompense which, in his imaginative style, he called "the good point of honour," he would have desired a maritime war. But Europe, tired by the long struggle with the empire, now enjoyed profound peace, and the olive-tree shadowed the French vessels with its pacific branches. Sad, but not discouraged, he was beginning to give up all hope of displaying his courage, when an unforeseen occasion occurred which responded to his dearest wish.

One day, amidst the most furious storm he had ever known since he went to sea, signals of distress were heard in the distance, and soon after, his vessel perceived a Russian ship in the most imminent danger, dismasted and tossed about like a coble. The alarm gun continued to sound like a voice of mourning and sorrow. The sea was so boisterous that every means of rescue seemed impos-

sible. Andrew contemplated with deep emotion this mournful scene, which threatened each moment to terminate with the loss of lives and of property. "Captain," said he to the commander of the vessel, who also followed with anxiety the phases of this maritime drama, "must we then leave these noble fellows to perish, without rendering them any help?" The captain contented himself by pointing to the waves, which were running mountains high, and dashing with fury against the sides of the ship. The distress-guns became more and more frequent and hurried. Above the roaring of the waves and the whistling of the rigging, they heard the cries from the Russian ship imploring help. "Lower the long-boat!" cried the captain, and "now Volunteers." Fifty sailors at once responded to his call,—our hero among the first.

"You are a brave young fellow!" said the captain; "take five-and-twenty men with you, and go under God's keeping."

"Under God's keeping," repeated Andrew solemnly, and, followed by twenty-five devoted sailors, he threw himself into the long-boat. The storm was now at its height; one would have said that, jealous of the victims which they were trying to take from it, it redoubled its fury to swallow at once the Russian ship and its deliverers. The long-boat soon disappeared from the sight of the crew of the French vessel, who were collected on deck, expecting a catastrophe. The distress-guns were no longer heard. Andrew found himself alongside of the ship in danger. It was the critical moment. "My lads," cried the brave midshipman, "invoke with me the blessed Virgin, mother of sailors. I know a prayer which she loves to answer," and with a firm voice he said the *Memorare*, which was repeated in a low tone by his valiant companions. A moment afterwards a

rope, thrown from the deck of the Russian vessel, brought the boat alongside without danger, and gave the distressed sailors the means of escape. They pulled off, and very soon the French crew welcomed with lively acclamations, the return of the boat; the captain pressing the brave Andrew to his breast, whose courage and skill had saved the lives of sixty men. Among those who had been saved was a Russian officer, who belonged to one of the first Muscovite families. The same day Andrew saw his name inscribed in the ship's log book, and three months afterwards he received from the French government a first class gold medal. He announced the happy news to his family in these words:—

“DEAR FATHER,—At last I bear on my breast the gold medal I desired so much. Your son's name has been mentioned in the public despatches, and the King has given me a gold medal for having saved the lives of the crew of a Russian frigate. I owe this good fortune to the Blessed Virgin, whom I invoked in the hour of danger. I owe to her the lives of sixty men, and the honour of having signaled myself by an action which has redoubled the esteem of my superiors and the affection of my comrades for me. I hope soon to have the pleasure of embracing you all again, as I now do in imagination, with a loving and respectful heart.—Your son,

ANDREW.”

Whilst the breeze of fortune was now swelling the sails of our young mariner, the Lord, whose designs are impenetrable, sent heavy trials to his family, which had hitherto been so happy. An epidemic disease had left the farm stables empty; a commercial disaster had crushed one of the banks of the city of Grenoble, in which Père Rambaud had

placed part of his income, which was now diminished to less than half: for two years the harvests had been bad; a long illness, which had brought Madame Rambaud to the brink of the grave, had absorbed a greater part of their pecuniary resources. To add to their misfortune, the law of military conscription had obliged George, the only support of the afflicted family, to serve under the French standard. It was in the midst of these troubles that Andrew, who, in the eyes of his parents, was grown into a great man, returned home. The joy occasioned by his return was unbounded, and made them forget for an instant their domestic troubles. Andrew was the first to show an example of courage and resignation.

"Take courage, my father," said he; "I am young, strong, and vigorous. I come to embrace you, and to ask permission of you to enlist as a sailor altogether. This permission now becomes a necessity—I shall thus prevent my brother being called out; so that by this means George can be with you. In his name I will myself serve France; every body will gain by it. Thus let it be arranged—let us speak of it no more."

Father Rambaud could only reply to his son by his tears. The day following this scene saw the family in great distress. Père Rambaud, pale and disquieted, was pacing up and down his room, following with anxiety the hands which marked the hours upon the face of the old clock.

"What is the matter with you, father?" said Andrew. "Really, one would say that the fire had caught the powder-magazine, or that the vessel was going down!"

"What you say is but too true, child," said his father; "our house is in danger."

"But I am here!" cried Andrew proudly; and,

showing the gold medal that decorated his breast, he added, "I know well how to save—I will save the cottage, whatever happens."

"No, my child; for strength and courage have no power to prevent the danger which threatens it."

"Is it a settled thing, then?"

"Inevitable."

"We will see about that."

At that moment a blow dealt violently against the door interrupted the conversation, and made Père Rambaud jump, and his face turn quite pale.

"Who knocks in that way?" asked Andrew.

"The danger of which I was speaking, my poor child."

"Ah! well, I will open the door to receive it myself;" and, going towards the door, he opened it quickly to a tall and meagre-looking man of a sallow complexion, who had a roll of paper in his hand.

"What do you desire sir?" said Andrew.

"To execute an order. Forgive me all that may be painful and grievous in it."

"No phrases, sir; let us say little, but let that little be well said. What is it about?"

"An execution by act of law."

"An execution! You are, then, a corsair!"

"I am a bailiff."

"It comes to the same thing."

"Sir!" cried the bailiff, assuming an air of dignity.

"Now then, my good man, don't be angry; show me your warrant, and do your business."

"My *duty*, sir." So saying, he slowly unfolded his warrant, and began to make an inventory of the furniture, seized on account of a bill which had fallen due and had not been paid.

As soon as this operation was finished, at the

moment when the officer, who had really done his duty very civilly, was going to take his departure, Andrew, retaining him by his coat-tails, said to him :—

“ Would you be so good, sir, as to tell me how much that piece of paper amounts to which has procured us the honour of so early a visit ? ”

“ Capital, interest, and expenses, it amounts to five hundred and fifty-seven francs, ninty centimes ? ”

“ Excuse me ; but it seems that paper costs more in a farm-yard than on the deck of a ship. I have a proposal to make you. ”

“ What is it ? ”

“ To change paper for paper—exchange for exchange ; does that suit you ? ”

“ It depends. ”

“ And by way of interest, and *à propos* of good and bad paper, I will tell you a little amusing tale. Does that suit you ? ”

“ But first let us see your papers. ”

“ That is but fair, ” replied Andrew. Searching in the large pocket of his great-coat, he produced a tobacco-pouch made of shrunk leather, which he had the vain pretension to call his pocket book. In the pocket of this bag there was, amongst the many things indispensable to a smoker, a square piece of paper as yellow as a cigarette. “ That bit of paper, ” said he, “ was made at the Bank of France, and passes every where. Does that suit you ? ”

At the sight of the figures, which represented a thousand francs, the grim countenance of the bailiff relaxed into a smile, and he counted out on the table the sum of two hundred and forty-two francs, ten centimes, and said—

“ Young man, we are quits. ”

“ Not yet, my brave bailiff ; I owe you a tale, which I heard on board the *Suffren*. ”

"You are right: a tale about paper."

"Here it is. One day, an ugly customer, escaped no doubt from the galleys of Toulon, was required by a worthy gendarme to show his paper. This customer of ours had taken the name of one of the most illustrious families of Brittany; but, instead of writing Kersabier with a K, he wrote it with a Q. The gendarme, well versed in the orthography of the names of his country, collared his man, saying to him, 'Turn your Q into a K, and your paper will do.' There. Now, worthy bailiff, we are quits; you may retire."

Père Rambaud, who had been a silent witness of this amusing scene, threw himself upon his son's neck, saying: "Well, Andrew, you are a brave young man; I am proud of you!"

Nothing in the world renders us so happy as having done a good action; especially when that action is prompted by filial piety. Andrew's return brought back prosperity and happiness to his family, which had been so cruelly tried. The very day of his departure for Toulon, where he was going to engage himself as a sailor instead of his brother, in obedience to the law of conscription, Père Rambaud succeeded to the place of the schoolmaster who had lately died, and entered on the exercise of his functions. This modest dignity would ameliorate his position, already improved by the generous present of five hundred francs of the savings of his son. Andrew, happier and prouder of having saved his family than having the good mark, signed his engagement as a sailor in the navy, and was appointed to join the French squadron before Sebastopol. Like all his comrades, he did his duty bravely, and distinguished himself in all dangers and difficulties by a coolness always equal to his courage. Whilst in the trenches, where the sailors were called upon

to play an active part, he worthily sustained the honour of the French flag.

His mother, who had now quite recovered, was praying for him. George was very successful as a farmer, and became the stay of his family, while his father, beloved by the people of the village, became the oracle of the events of the day. Every evening, in a tavern which bore the pompous title of the *Café d'Orient*, taking his place amongst the authorities of the neighbourhood, with the mayor, the churchwarden, and the farrier, amongst a group of agriculturists, whose blue blouses contrasted singularly with the uniform of some young soldiers on leave—he read, in his best style, the newspaper which contained the exploits of our valiant army. These readings, listened to with the deepest attention by the simple and patriotic folk of the mountains of Dauphiné, were enlivened by vigorous smoking, and watered by sundry draughts of the country wine. A rickety stool, or the end of a polished walnut-wood bench, served as a seat for the reader, whose reading was always accompanied by salutary reflections. One evening, the society of the *Café d'Orient* was more numerous than usual; all the neighbourhood had hastened thither to fête the arrival of a Zouave returned home to restore his health, and to listen to a letter that M. le Curé had just received from the seat of war. All those who were generally at the *Café*, even Père Rambaud himself, were ignorant of its contents. One could have heard a fly move, so great was the silence when Père Rambaud, putting on his spectacles, commenced reading the letter so impatiently desired:—

“MONSIEUR LE CURE.—I have just been present at the battle of Inkermann—a battle which, in the opinions of our veterans, recalls to mind the most glorious days of the empire. On both sides, they fought with

a courage worthy of the demigods whom you used to tell me about in the Greek and Roman History. They fought hand to hand, and even with pieces of rock, like the heroes of the *Iliad*. I saw trenches filled with blood, and whole mountains of slain. I think France will be pleased with us. Dauphiné will have no reason to complain of her children, for our countrymen behaved themselves like true lions. François Montfouilloux saved his captain's life—Pierre Desiles saved Montfouilloux's life. Dejardin received the military medal on the field of battle; but the one of our country who distinguished himself most was, was"—"Oh, good heavens! what do I see?" cried Père Rambaud, interrupting his reading—"my son's name"—but accustomed to master his emotion he continued—"was Andrew Rambaud, surnamed Braveall:—surprised with sixty men in a trench, where he had been already ten hours in service, attacked by two hundred Russians, repulsed at first, but returning to the charge, he mainly contributed to save his battery, after it had been taken and re-taken twice. Always at the post of danger, he took prisoner with his own hand the officer who commanded the enemy's column. People here tell something about this which seems so marvellous, that I dare not mention it for fear you should not believe it. Jérôme Patomi was killed by a cannon-ball—my comrades beg me to ask you to say a mass for the repose of his soul. With this hope, I am, Monsieur le Curé, your old server at mass, and now server of a battery, about which the enemy might tell you something if they could write French.

ANTOINE SIRANT."

Père Rambaud had hardly finished reading the letter when, tearing himself from the congratulations of his hearers, he ran to tell his family of Andrew's fresh exploits.

The joy of the Rambaud family was singularly stimulated by the silence of Antoine Sirant about Andrew's exploits. What could be the marvellous thing he did not like to mention, on account of its improbability? In the present state of things this was a problem difficult to solve—an enigma which would have puzzled Œdipus. The Rambaud family, after having in vain tried to find it out, wisely left it to time to explain it. Time did not keep them long waiting.

One day towards the end of December, 1855, a stranger of distinction appeared at Rambaud's door, and asked to speak privately to the head of the family. Père Rambaud introduced him into the dining-room—the only room in the house which was well heated—and, after having asked him to sit down in an arm-chair, which was old enough to have belonged to his grandfather, asked him the object of his visit.

"I come to see you, sir," replied the stranger, "for two reasons; firstly, to shake hands with the father of a noble-hearted man; secondly, to acquit myself of a debt of gratitude."

"In the first case you will be welcomed, sir," replied Père Rambaud; "my hand will be proud to press the hand of one who speaks to my heart by thus honouring the name of my son."

"In the second place," said the stranger, "you must help me to recompense your son, who has twice saved my life; the first time at sea, on board a vessel which would have lost both men and goods but for him; the second time at Inkermann, when, having been taken prisoner by him, I was on the point of perishing by his comrades' bayonets. In consequence of an exchange, which has just taken

place of some French and Russian prisoners, I have obtained permission to return to Russia ; but I would not leave the hospitable soil of France until I had discharged a debt which I consider sacred. Here are fifty thousand francs, sir, and I beg of you to accept them, and to give them to monsieur, your son."

Père Rambaud's first movement was to push aside the hand which presented to him a mass of bank-notes ; but the stranger insisted with so much eloquence, and gave such good reasons, that at last Père Rambaud accepted them, without compromising his own or his son's dignity.

This event produced a great sensation throughout the country, where Andrew's family had acquired, by hereditary virtues, the affection and esteem of all. Andrew is still in the French service ; but his comrades, transposing his surname of Braveall, now call him ALLBRAVE.

MARIETTE.

THE sun was shining as fair as the sun could shine in a beautiful May morning—bright, yet gentle—warm, but fresh ; when in the beautiful valley of Vire—everybody knows Vire—but, lest there should be anybody in the wide world who does not, dear reader, I will tell you all about it.

Supposing you first arrived at Havre—get out of it again as fast as you can ; then cross the river to Honfleur ; from Honfleur go on to Caen ; and after you have paused five minutes to think about William the Conqueror, put yourself into the diligence for St. Malo ; and when you have travelled just twelve

leagues and a half, you will come to a long steep hill, crowned by a pretty airy-looking town, whose buildings in some parts gathered on the very pinnacle, in others running far down the slope, seem as if coquetting with the rich valleys that woo them from below.

Next morning sally forth to the eastern corner of the town, and you will have a fair view over one of the loveliest valleys that Nature's profuse hand ever gifted with beauty. The soft clear stream of the Vire winding sweetly along between the green sloping hills and the rich woods, and the fields, and chateaux, and hamlets, and the sunshine catching upon all its meanderings, and the birds singing their song of love, as its calm waters roll bountifully by them: look upon it, and you will not find it difficult to imagine how the soul, even of an obscure artisan in a remote age warmed into poetry and music in the bosom of that valley and by the side of that stream.

It was, then, in that beautiful vale of Vire, some twenty years ago, that François Lormier went out to take his last May-walk with Mariette Duval, before the relentless conscription called him from his happy home, his sweet valleys, and his early love. It was a sad walk, as may well be imagined; for though the morning was bright, and Nature, to her shame be it spoken, had put on her gayest smiles, as if to mock their sorrow, yet the sunshine of the scene could not find its way to their hearts, and all seemed darkened and clouded around them. They talked a great deal, and they talked a long time; but far be it from me to betray their private conversation. I would not for all the world—especially as I know not one word about it—except, indeed, that François Lormier vowed unwavering fidelity; and that Mariette protested she would

never marry anybody except François Lormier, even if rich old Monsieur Latoussefort were to lay himself and fortune at her feet. "But if I should lose a limb!" said François Lormier. "What matters that?" replied Mariette.

They parted. Mariette wept a great deal, but soon got calm again, went about her ordinary work, sang her song, danced at the village fête, talked with the talkers, laughed with the laughers, and won the hearts of all the youths in the place by her unadorned beauty and her native grace. But still she did not forget François Lormier; and when any one came to ask her in marriage, the good dame, her mother, referred them directly to Mariette, who had always her answer ready, and with a kind word and a gentle look sent them away refused, but not offended. At length good old Monsieur Latoussefort presented himself with all his money-bags, declaring that his only wish was to enrich his gentle Mariette; but Mariette was steady, and so touchingly did she talk to him about poor François Lormier, that the old man went away with tears in his eyes. Six months afterwards he died, when, to the wonder of the whole place, he left his large fortune to Mariette Duval!

In the meanwhile François joined the army; and from a light handsome conscript, he soon became a brave steady soldier. Attached to the great northern army, he underwent all the hardships of the campaigns in Poland and Russia; but still he never lost his cheerfulness—for the thought of Mariette kept his heart warm, and even a Russian winter could not freeze him. All through that miserable retreat he made the best of every thing. His courage and his powers of endurance called upon him from the first the eyes of one whose best quality was the impartiality of his recompense. François

was rewarded as well as he could be rewarded ; but at length, in one of those unfortunate battles by which Napoleon strove in vain to retrieve his fortune, the young soldier, in the midst of his gallant daring, was desperately wounded in the arm.

Mutilated, sick, weary, and ragged, François approached his native valley ; and, doubtful of his reception—for misery is apt to make people change—sought the cottage of Madame Duval. The cottage was gone ; and on inquiring for Madame Duval, he was directed to a fine farm-house by the banks of the stream. He thought there must be some mistake ; but yet he dragged his heavy limbs thither, and knocked timidly at the door.

“ Come in,” cried the good-humoured voice of the old dame. François entered, and unbidden tottered to a chair. Madame Duval gazed on him for a moment, and then, rushing to the stairs, called loudly, “ Come down, Mariette, come down ! here is François returned ! ”

Like lightning Mariette darted down the stairs, saw the soldier's old great coat, and flew towards it, stopped, gazed on his haggard face and empty sleeve ; and gasping, fixed her eyes upon his countenance. For a moment she gazed on him thus in silence ; but there was no forgetfulness, nor coldness, nor pride about her heart—there was sorrow, and joy, and memory, and true affection in her glance. “ O François, François ! ” cried she, at length casting her arms round his neck, “ how you have suffered ! ” As she did so, the old great coat fell back, and on his breast appeared the golden cross of the legion of honour. “ No matter,” cried she, as she saw it ; you have done your duty, and I am content. God and our Holy Mother be praised ! ”

The rest we may safely leave to the reader's imagination.

THE BLACK SEAL.

"Is it true, then, mother, that when I shall be fifteen years old you will tell me something from the other side of the grave, as Monsieur le Curé says?"

"Yes, my child, if at fifteen years old Michel Lacroix has become a better boy, and more studious at school, he will be able to read fluently for himself the message which I have to communicate to him at that time, in accordance with a will."

"I begin to know all my letters already, when they are not too small."

"Already, eh! that's not much to boast of, I think, at your age; you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"What would you have, mother? I have no wish to be a learned man, still less a half-learned one, who is, as Monsieur le Curé says, a pest to society. When you send me to school of a morning, and I see the birds singing amongst the leaves, and the horses frisking in the meadows, I fancy I am going to prison. Why is it so, mother? Because my chest requires air—because my forehead requires the breeze which blows in autumn—the snow which falls in winter, and the sun which glows in summer. Away with study, and long live the liberty of the fields and of the sea! Now, mother, I must just tell you my way of thinking . . . I wish to be a sailor, as my father, my grandfather, and all my ancestors were."

father and your grandfather knew how to read, write,

"It is a noble profession for a Breton; but your and cipher."

"The famous Jean Bart knew at most how to sign his name."

"What one could excuse in the time of Jean Bart, would be unpardonable nowadays."

"Very well, mother, say no more about it. I shall soon know how to read in an old book, as I already know how to do the parts of a vessel."

"Oh! as for that," said a stout man who hitherto had taken no part in the conversation—"as for that, I can vouch for my pupils being the first readers of a ship in the country, without flattering myself. Now, then, child, tell me what a garnet is?"

"The garnet is a rope which has a simple pulley tied fast to a great stay, and serves in loading a ship."

"Very well, child, what are bow lines?"

"Bow-lines are long cords which are joined on to shorter ones, called clews, which are tied to the corners of the sail."

"Very well. What is the use of bow-lines?"

"The use of bow-lines is to pull the bolt-ropes of the sail tight, so as to hold the wind better."

"Very well; explain to us the meaning of studding-sails."

"Studding-sails are small sails which are put up when the wind is very light, to aid those of the vessel."

"What is a crosstaff?"

"It is a graduated instrument, by which sailors can tell the height of the sun and the other stars in the horizon."

"Better and better, child. What does 'to drive with the tide' mean?"

"To lead a vessel against the wind in the current of a river."

"What is a cathead?"

"It is a great rope which runs through a pulley fixed to a large iron hook, the use of which is to handle the anchors."

"Bravo, child! you have answered like a real Tourville. What do you think of it, sister?"

"I say that merely reading a vessel is not sufficient nowadays for a man who wishes to push his way. I think that Michel ought to be ashamed to be the last in his school."

"But to make up for that he is the first in all our holiday games; and amongst those of his age there is not one who knows better than he how to hoist a rope, to moor a cross vessel, and to fix the shrouds. Only yesterday he made big Simon take a bath gratis, who is a head taller and five years older than he is."

"Is it true, Michel?"

"It was quite necessary to defend the honour of the parish—the tower is the flag of the Breton peasant—woe to him that touches it."

"What did Simon do to you?"

"Nothing; just think what would have befallen him if he had!"

"Then, you little rogue, you were the aggressor?"

"I am not capable of it, mother. Judge for yourself. I was mending our nets when big Simon passed by, driving before him his grey ass—the old grey one, you know. Where are you both going like that?" said I.

"To enroll Gris in your parish, so that there may be one the more, and to replace your master, who they say is very ill."

"Simon answered that, did he—the rude boy?"

"That is not all, mother, listen to the end."

"You must take care never to let Gris drink by moonlight," added Simon.

"Why?" said I, clenching my fists.

"Because," said Simon, "he would drink the moon, which would be very unfortunate for him."

"I did not understand him. Nevertheless, I was nearly bursting with rage. Simon continuing, related to me that one evening an ass was drinking by moonlight at the pool of our parish; a cloud eclipsing the moon, the darkness prevented some women who were washing some things at the pool from seeing. These women, said Simon, accused the ass of having drunk the moon, and, as the poor beast could not justify himself, they ripped him up in order to obtain possession of the moon, which accordingly soon re-appeared. Now, mother, what would you have done if such an insult had been paid you?"

"I should have contented myself with shrugging my shoulders."

"But I preferred rubbing those of Simon; but, as I rubbed them rather hard, it appears I flung him into the water to refresh himself."

"But you might have drowned him, child!"

"Oh, no fear of that, Simon swims like a mackerel!"

"Really, you never mean to be good!"

"Well then, by our Lady of Auray you will see. From to-day, mother, I set foot in the path of reason, and, before six months' time, I shall know how to read, write, and cipher, as well as my father and mother."

"Then, nothing will prevent my giving you the message which you are to know when you are fifteen. May God and our Lady of Auray keep you in your good disposition!"

This singular dialogue took place between a woman already advanced in age, the daughter, wife,

and mother of a generation of fishermen; an old sailor who was her brother, and a boy whose strong neck and round shoulders denoted unusual strength.

Madame Lacroix, who had been a widow for ten years, had lost her husband, who had been made prisoner on board a vessel of which he was commander, and sent to the desert island of Cabrera, where he died. Her husband's father and one of her uncles perished in the fatal battle of La Hogue.

The day on which the mysterious message was to be delivered to her boy was drawing near. On the eve of that day Michel Lacroix made his first communion; devoutly prepared for this great action in a Christian's life, he received this divine food with sentiments of fervent piety; the more so as his age allowed him to appreciate the importance of the grace which God gave him in communicating himself substantially to his soul. Like Jean Bart, Michel Lacroix learned the duties of a Christian at an early age. At last the epoch so long desired had arrived; Michel had attained his fifteenth year; this day, which was to exercise such a great influence upon his life as a sailor, was the 24th of March. Having risen with the sun, Michel went at nine o'clock to his mother, who, clothed in mourning, gave him her hand, saying—"Michel, I have been waiting for you;" then after a moment's silence, which appeared a century to the young man, who was waiting impatiently, she added—"My child, I am pleased with you; you have been faithful to your engagement. I must fulfil the promise I made you." Then she went to an old walnut wood trunk, upon which an artist of the middle ages had sculptured the Massacre of the Innocents; she took out from it a little hard wooden chest, with gilt-headed nails round the edges, carefully locked. Madame Lacroix slowly opened it, and taking from

it a letter, the square envelope of which bore a large seal of black wax—she gave it to her son, who read in a loud voice, and with deep emotion, the following lines :—

“ MY DEAR SON,—

“ When you read this letter you will be a man, for in Brittany one becomes a man at fifteen, but then you will be fatherless. I am, like many others, a victim to the capitulation of Baylen, and was transported in violation of the law of nations, and the terms of an honourable capitulation, to the desert rocks of the island of Cabrera. I have suffered all that one can suffer from keepers who are turned into executioners. Devoured by hunger and thirst, exposed to the most savage treatment of ferocious enemies of France, I am reduced to that point that I bless the death which approaches, and desire it as the termination of my sufferings.

“ Spain, who has violated with regard to us the sacred laws of humanity, will have an immense responsibility in the eyes of God and of posterity. Far from me, dear child, the thought of wishing to sow in your young heart the germ which ripens into the spirit of hatred and of vengeance. I have seen too much lately of the excesses to which vengeance and hatred may go, not to abhor them as a soldier, as a Frenchman, and as a Christian. If, at my last hour, the hour of my deliverance, I retrace to you the torments of my captivity, it is not to excite you to revenge me one day ; no, a thousand times no—it is to forewarn you, I repeat, against the prejudices of the human mind, which too often, alas, animates people against people, brethren against brethren. One day, no doubt, you will have, as your ancestors have had, the honour of serving France either as a soldier upon land, or as a sailor in the vessels of the state. You will bravely do

your duty, I am sure; in an enemy, wounded or conquered, you will only see an unhappy or a disabled brother. Far from putting him to death, give him generously your hand to raise him up. You must become a rampart to his body if attacked by your furious companions. Such is my will at the hour of my death—remember the will of a dying person is something sacred and holy. I die in the bosom of the Catholic Church. I die full of penitence for the faults I have committed, full of confidence in God's mercy. I forgive, according to holy precept, all my enemies in general, and especially Fernandez Huertas, the Spaniard, who, by ill treatment, in abridging my days, tears from me the hope of again seeing what I hold most dear in the world—my wife, my son, and my beloved Brittany.

“Huertas for a long time coveted a watch which the illustrious Tourville gave to my grandfather, as a recompense for some service he rendered him when on board his vessel as a pilot. This watch was remarkable for an allegoric painting which decorated its golden case, and represented St. Michel carrying a cross for a lance; from father to son, the eldest of the family of Lacroix is called Michel. Yesterday I happened to be alone with Huertas in the Valley of the Dead, when he threw himself upon me on a most trivial pretext, and robbed me of this precious heir-loom of my family, and which I should like to have left to my son.

“Adieu, dear child! I make you heir of all I possess, and I leave you for inheritance the home of our fathers, and something better still, the example and remembrance of their virtues. Adieu! We shall meet again in a better world.—Your father,

“MICHEL LACROIX.

“P. S.—I intrust this letter to the kindness of an English sailor, who took compassion upon me; he promised to see that it should reach France by the first opportunity. God grant that he may keep his word!

“Written at Cabrera, the 1st of June, 1810.”

Several times whilst reading this letter, dictated by heroic sentiments of Christian charity, Michel had been obliged to pause to wipe away his tears with the back of his hand. His mother also wept. After having pressed his father's signature to his lips, Michel said—“Willingly would I give the beard that I shall soon have, that the murderers of my father were within my grasp.”

“Why, my son?”

“Because I should like to meet them one day at the end of my boarding-pike, and so the son would worthily avenge his father's death, I assure you.”

“You have already forgotten,” replied Madame Lacroix, “that your father's last words were those of pardoning and forgetting——”

“I will pardon also; but I could never forget, and memory would augment my strength, and would make me combat with happiness my father's jailers of the island of Cabrera, though, when once they were down, I might give them my hand to raise them up.”

“Well said, child!” said his uncle Jerome, who had assisted at the end of this scene. “You will do honour to your father's memory.”

This occurred in 1817. Michel had just attained his fifteenth year; but one would have taken him for three years older, to judge by his robust health and formed character. He begged so much of his mother, that she at last consented that he should go to Brest, where he engaged himself on board a vessel

of the navy. Later, when he had fulfilled the conditions enforced by law, he signed his engagement as a sailor.

At this time, a French army, commanded by the Duke d'Angoulême, crossed the Pyrenees, to re-establish a throne overturned by the revolution. For the first time Michel regretted that he was a sailor, because he was thus deprived of the pleasure of combating, as a soldier, a nation which had occasioned his father's premature death. The entrance of the French troops into Spain was a triumphant march, celebrated by the victories of St. Sebastian and of Trocadon. The revolution was subdued, and King Ferdinand regained the sceptre of which it had deprived him. Some thousands of prisoners were brought into France.

Among these was a Catalonian, whose body seemed to have been copied from that of Hercules; and who was still more remarkable for the instincts of an indomitable and savage nature, marked by an implacable hatred against the French. Matteo, confiding in his strength, and above all in the skill with which he dispatched, with scientific precision, all adversaries whom he could reach with the point of his sword or the end of his gun, had distinguished himself under Mina by acts of ferocity almost incredible. Chief of a band of guerillas, he boasted of never having given quarter to any Frenchman whom he had surprised in an ambushade. Thus, he soon became the terror of Toulon, occupying the leisure of his captivity by encounters generally fatal to the unfortunates whom he had drawn into a quarrel by unjust provocation.

One evening in a *café*, a young Parisian, named Perret, taking his place at the same table without asking his leave, was insulted, provoked, and at last killed before several witnesses. This young man

had engaged himself on board a small vessel which was under repair in the Toulon docks, the same in which Michel had embarked, with whom he was thus on intimate terms. Michel vowed that he would punish the murderer of his comrade. An occasion was not long in offering itself. The next day Michel went early to the *café*, where Matteo went every evening, to lie in wait like a wild beast for its prey. A few minutes later Matteo entered, proud of yesterday's success, with a provoking assurance, his cap on one side, and his hand on his hip. Seated in a corner of the hall, at a table where there was only room for two people, Michel was reading attentively the newspaper of the day; Matteo sat down immediately at his side, and throwing down his red cap on the table under Michel's nose, he rolled a cigarette in his fingers, then lighted it, and blew an immense body of smoke right across his neighbour's face. Michel jumped from his seat, raised his hand, but at the moment when he was going to let it fall upon the face of the Spaniard, he calmed himself and only said—"Sir, do not repeat that, for tobacco smoke does not at all agree with me when it is so near."

"Perhaps you would prefer that of powder," replied Matteo.

"Perhaps, as you say—every one to his taste."

"In that case it would be easy for me to satisfy yours."

"We shall see that; but I shall be occupied in reading this paper for a quarter of an hour, so leave me to finish it."

"Be good enough to excuse me, but I came here on purpose to read it, and, as I am in a hurry, you must give it up to me."

"Ah—you are in a hurry, sir! Very well; but, as I am not, I advise you to take a draught of

patience instead of the coffee you ordered." Then, turning to the waiter, Michel said in a calm though emphatic voice—"Waiter! a cup of patience for monsieur, if you please; serve it hot and very sweet—monsieur wants sweetness!"

Matteo, who understood French as well as he spoke it, jumped in his turn from his seat, ready to throw himself upon Michel, who stopped him with a look, and these words—"Patience is the mother of safety."

The French sailor was drinking beer. The Spaniard, annoyed by Michel's coolness, took up passionately his red cap and placed it upon the sailor's jug, who burst out laughing, saying—"It appears, Signor Cavalier, that you take that jug for a Spaniard's head."

Matteo bit his lips, and remained silent at the keen reply. Silence reigned in the interior of the *café*; it was the silence of the calm which on the seashore precedes a storm. The brown face of the Spaniard had become quite purple with rage; passion was working in the swelling veins of his forehead. The forehead of the Frenchman was as calm as the heart of a Breton on the day of the feast of our Lady of Auray.

"This plate of red carrot here, annoys me," said Michel;" "I pray you, sir, to put it on your head."

"I shall do nothing of the kind, for it is already much too warm here."

"Nevertheless," said Michel, getting up and opening the stove door; "see, the fire is going out."

"Ah!—well, keep it in."

"What with?"

"Whatever you like."

"Thanks for your advice." Then the sailor, ap-

proaching the table, took off the red cap from the jug, and kicked it into the stove."

"You are a dead man!" said Matteo.

"But not yet buried," replied Michel; "the gravedigger has not had time to dig my grave."

"I will place you in it myself!"

"When, if you please?"

"To-morrow!"

"At what time?"

"At daybreak!"

"At what place?"

"Behind the great cemetery wall."

"That is enough."

"Now finish your newspaper, the sooner the better, for in the interest of the future life I advise you to see a priest. Now, then, make haste. I allow you five minutes." Thus saying, he pulled out a large gold watch, which he placed before him on the table.

At the sight of that watch a cloud seemed to pass over Michel's face, which till then had remained unchanged, but now became quite pale. This watch bore on the case of it a figure of St. Michel bearing a cross as a lance.

"Where did you get that watch from?" cried Michel, in a hurried tone.

"What is that to you?" replied Matteo.

"I wish to know, because I believe it to be a family watch; the watch of a gallant Frenchman who was basely assassinated by a Spaniard in the island of Cabrera, in 1810—it is my father's watch. But speak, sir." A complete change had come over Michel; with inflamed countenance and clenched fists, his upper lip curled with an expression indicating thirst of vengeance, his eyes bloodshot, his voice short and quivering, he repeated—"Where have you taken this watch from?"

"I have not taken it, sir. It came to me by descent at my father's death."

"What was your father's name?"

"The same as mine."

"What is your name?"

"That of a brave Spaniard, Huertas."

"Huertas," cried Michel, "is the name of a coward and of an assassin. Your father treacherously assassinated mine. God is just, because to-day he sends the son of the murderer to the son of the victim."

The impression produced by this scene can easily be understood, but cannot be put into words. Accompanied by two witnesses chosen from amongst the inmates of the *Café de Paris*, the Frenchman and the Spaniard went to a deserted place situated at the extremity of the town. The stars of heaven, like funeral torches, lighted up the way that Matteo had gone the day before at the same hour, to add one name more to the bloody catalogue of his victims.

"What are your arms, sir?" inquired Matteo of Michel, when they had reached the place.

"I am your man, sir, with any weapon you please," replied Michel.

"Let us cast lots—that shall decide!"

"Throw up a piece of money in the air—heads for the sword, and tails for the pistol."

The money came to the sword. The attack, which was made on both sides with great vigour, was of short duration. The Spaniard was obliged to yield, and was soon disarmed; he had placed himself upon a damp spot of ground, and his foot had slipped in the very blood which he had himself shed the day before.

"Strike, then," said Matteo, "my life belongs to you."

"Do you take me for an assassin?" replied Michel, giving a generous hand to his adversary. He added—"I could kill you, but I will not; the last wishes of my dying father interpose obedience, which is due to his memory. Listen, sir, to the last recommendation of Michel Lacroix, who died in 1810, in the island of Cabrera, and under the stroke of a man who has now appeared before God's tribunal; listen, sir!" Then drawing from a pocket-book, which he always carried about him, a letter sealed with black-wax, he read with emotion the following lines by the light of two torches, which the seconds had procured to give light for the combat.

"One day no doubt you will have, as your ancestors have had, the honour of serving France either as a soldier upon land, or as a sailor in the vessels of the state. You will bravely do your duty I am sure; in an enemy wounded or conquered you will only see an unhappy or a disabled brother. Far from putting him to death, give him generously your hand to raise him up. You must become a rampart to his body if attacked by your furious companions. Such is my will at the hour of my death; remember the will of a dying person is something sacred and holy."

"I remember," added Michel, after a moment's silence, which gave Matteo time for reflection; I remember, and that is why in this critical moment I offer a friendly hand to the son of the murderer of my father. Brother, I forgive you."

Matteo threw himself into the open arms of his generous victor.

The day after this nocturnal encounter, the conclusion of which produced a lively emotion in the city of Toulon, Michel Lacroix received a box containing a watch and a letter; the watch was the sacred heirloom of his family; the letter ran thus:—

“SIR,—I have the honour of restoring to you the family treasure, which the misfortune of dissensions between kingdoms had placed in my father’s possession. Of our fight, I will only remember the loyalty of your generous character. You were master of my life; you might have killed me, but you spared me, and offered me a friendly hand. May God bless you a thousand times, sir; for you have a noble heart! In the French, whom only yesterday I considered as my mortal enemies, henceforward I will only see my brothers. I make this solemn vow before you and before God, whom I take to witness for the loyalty of my sentiments. The hour of expiation has already struck for me. For nine months I have been united to a beloved wife, who was to have given us a child in a few days. I hear now that she is dying; as a prisoner of war, I am deprived of the consolation of even receiving her last sigh. I accept this blow as a just punishment of my sins, and offer it to God as a pledge of my repentance and of my sorrow. Adieu, Sir.

“Be pleased, sir, if I am not too unworthy, to count, in the number of your devoted friends,

MATTEO.”

Matteo, by a delicacy of sentiment which the reader will no doubt appreciate, forbore adding a surname which might have brought back too painful thoughts to Michel’s mind.

About this time a great fire broke out in the Toulon arsenal, and occasioned great disaster. At

one time the flames, increased by a north wind, threatened even to blow up the powder magazine. At this critical moment, a man, a sailor, distinguished himself above all others by his courage and self-devotion: it was Michel Lacroix. His noble conduct was deemed worthy of reward. The prefect of Toulon, having told him to come to his house, took him into his room and said to him, "Michel, you are a brave young fellow; the king, who knows how to reward every kind of service, will no doubt recompense you; I intend to ask him to give you the cross of the legion of honour; nevertheless, if there is any other favour you wish for, tell it me; I will do all that depends upon me to obtain it for you."

Michel, who was as modest in success as he was brave in peril, replied—

"Monsieur the prefect, you are very good in bestowing your praises upon one who, having done his duty like many others, is already quite enough rewarded by the testimony of his conscience; nevertheless, since you deign to grant me a favour, I accept your offer with gratitude."

"What do you wish?"

"Amongst the prisoners of war who are at Toulon, there is a young Spaniard, who is on the point of losing his wife; he is in despair at not being able to be with her; as a husband and a father he is wounded in his tenderest affections. He would bless the hand which, setting him at liberty, should allow him to console the last moments of his beloved wife. It would be an act of holy generosity worthy of France. Permit me to hope for it of your benevolence. Instead of the cross of honour you proposed, I ask the liberation of Matteo Huertas."

"Brave and generous Michel!" replied the prefect, who knew all the circumstances of the combat

we have narrated. "Noble boy, your father in heaven ought to be happy and proud of having such a son. Give me your hand that I may press it in mine!" And, going to his desk, he wrote on the spot a decree which allowed Matteo Huertas to return to Catalonia. A month afterwards Michel received the cross of the legion of honour, the cross of the strong and the brave.

Michel Lacroix retired when still young from the service of the navy, to assist his mother in her declining days. He has found happiness and peace in his marriage, and is the father of a numerous family, of which the eldest reads as well in big books as in the rigging of a vessel; and, if the perfection of happiness were possible in this world, he certainly would have thought it was placed in his own house. His neighbours and friends, who sometimes ask Breton hospitality of him, see suspended at the side of a black wooden crucifix a case with a gilt edge; in this case is a watch, with the figure of the patron Saint Michael upon it, and at its foot is a cross of honour and a large black seal.

INCIDENTS OF SAILOR LIFE.

I INTEND to relate to you, dear reader, in a quiet way, a few incidents which may not be without some interest. These anecdotes will make you appreciate all that is good and noble in the energetic and lively nature of our brave sailors.

A few days ago, Monsieur l'Abbé G. G. de Laval, so well known in the French navy for his zeal, his charity, and his self-devotion, had given the last sacraments on board ship to a quarter-master. This brave sailor was quite aware of his state. "I am

done," he said to his confessor, and then, uneasy about the state of his soul, he added—

"Do you think, Monsieur l'Abbé, that I am fit to appear before God?"

The Abbé replied, "As long as a man's heart continues to beat, he may still hope to live; nevertheless, if God calls you, you may appear before him with confidence."

"It is to you that I owe this assurance."

"I have done all that lies in my power, my dear friend, for your salvation; but on your side, having received with faith and love, as I believe you have, the sacraments which give eternal life to the dying, whatever may be the designs of providence in regard to you, you may be at peace."

"Ah, well! in that case, God's will be done; I am now ready to be overhauled."

This brave man lived a day and a half after uttering these words, which prove a simple faith as well as a perfect indifference to life. The true soul of a sailor is here painted. Full of resignation to the will of God, and of hope in his divine mercy, he quietly fell asleep in the Lord.

"You will one day be chaplain-general of the French navy," said an old sailor to the Abbé Coqueureau, whose courage and self-devotion he had often admired.

"Why so, my friend?"

"For two reasons."

"What are they?"

"First of all, because you know better than any one the road which leads straight to a sailor's heart; secondly, because you are marked out for a sailor by the name you bear."

"I do not know the etymology of it."

“Coquereau means a small vessel; but in this instance the small vessel is manned by a noble heart.”

A few days after this, the Abbé was deemed worthy of the grade of officer in the legion of honour, which was granted to him at the request of the commander-in-chief of the expedition to the coast of Morocco. The *Moniteur* mentions this well deserved reward in these terms—

“The distinction which Monsieur l’Abbé Coquereau has just obtained, is well deserved by his admirable conduct. This worthy ecclesiastic did not quit the Prince of Joinville during all the combat, and he was seen on the days following it going from vessel to vessel, although the weather was terrific, to carry the succours of religion to the wounded, and to soften the sorrows of those who regretted quitting life at the moment when victory had crowned so gloriously their heroism.”

In quitting the harbour of Tripoli in stormy weather, the vessel on which the Abbé Coquereau had embarked, was in a most dangerous position, and threatened every moment to founder. In this great danger, the sailors commended their souls into God’s hands. The Abbé had first given them his blessing in the name of Him who can alone calm the fury of the waves. His attitude was as calm in peril as on the deck of a vessel in harbour.

“You are quite right, Reverend Father,” said the steersman to him; “you are quite right not to be frightened.”

“Why, my good man?”

“Because if but one person amongst us is saved, it will surely be you.”

“For what reason?”

“In order that you may pray for the others.”

All of them were saved; God’s hand had guided the vessel.

The Abbé Coquereau passed the night preceding the battle of Tangai and of Mogador in hearing the confessions of the sailors. All of them bravely did their duty, and many courageous exploits signalized that glorious day, thus begun under the auspices of religion. The chaplain's cassock, always at the most dangerous post, waved underneath the French flag like the banner of heaven. A Breton, named Kersouguff, master caulker on board the Belle Poule, distinguished himself amongst all others.

As long as the combat lasted, one might have seen him, his pipe in his mouth, and his back to the enemy, stopping up with admirable coolness the shotholes above some ports which had been set on fire.

"You behaved well," said the commander to him. "You did not lose courage an instant."

"It was no difficult matter; I had set my spiritual affairs to rights," said Kersouguff.

SAILORS profess great respect for their chaplains. "Now, at any rate," said they, when government gave them chaplains again, "we shall not die like dogs."

When a priest is hearing a confession in a hospital, all the other sick people uncover their heads spontaneously, and would on no account put on their caps again till the end of the ceremony. Sometimes they carry this feeling of respect so far that priests are obliged to interfere. Once a chaplain was confessing in the hospital of Valmy, when a sailor with a severe cold coughed, as he well might.

"Are you going to hold your tongue, you old fellow?" cried his companions, but the poor man could not put, as he himself said, a latch to his chest. The confessor, who took his part, had some difficulty in preventing a collision.

A priest relates as follows.

"UPON some coasts, especially Oceanica, the boats are often hindered from landing, by reefs of rock on a level with the sea, and are obliged to remain at a distance of some cables' length from the mainland. In this case, the sailors generally jump from the boats, and take their officers on their shoulders and carry them to land. I did not expect the same service rendered me: but never have I been obliged to ask them—they have always been the first to offer me this service."

LA Belle Poule, when she was on her way to St. Helena to fetch away the remains of the great captain, was in the Bay of Bahia. A sailor who was dangerously ill, asked of his own accord for the sacraments of religion. After he had made his confession, and received the last sacraments, he undid his belt, and, after having divided his little fortune into three parts, he gave them to Monsieur l'Abbé Coquereau, as the executor of his will. One of them was for his mother, another for his sister, and the third to buy a coffin for himself.

As Prince Louis-Napoleon, President of the Republic, was returning from an expedition, a sailor fell from the main-yard into the sea, near Cape Cepi. The vessel was going thirteen knots through a heavy sea. After having put up the helm, he was found after two hours' search sitting quietly on a life-buoy.

"When you fell into the sea, did you think on God?" said the chaplain of the vessel.

"I had not time to do so," answered the sailor;

"I tumbled too fast. But God wont lose any thing for that. The first time we stop at Marseilles, I will go and make a visit to *Notre Dame de la Garde*."

A formidable French fleet left Toulon on the 16th of June, 1609, commanded by a prince of the blood, the Duke de Beaufort, to deliver Candia, which was besieged by the Turks. He had with him a Capucin, Father Zephyrin. The fleet, favoured by beautiful weather, for some time slowly advanced. The admiral-ship, *Le Monarque*, preceded by a small brigantine, which served as a guide, was at the head, bearing with pride the banner of the sovereign pontiff. With the exception of a north-west squall, which snapped the top-masts of the Syrian when they were off the islands of Hyères, the passage bid fair to be most favourable.

The fleet had just left Cerigo, anciently called Cythera, to its left, and had doubled Cape Carobuca, which is the most easterly point of the island of Candia, when one morning the watch said that a signal from the *Therèse* had been given announcing that a priest was wanted for a sailor who was seriously ill. Père Zephyrin knowing this, went immediately to the captain of the admiral's vessel, and asked him to give orders so as to enable him to fulfil the duties of his ministry.

"What you ask, father," said the captain, "is quite impossible!"

"As things are, those words are neither French nor Christian. Over there is one of our comrades dying; it is my duty to go to him."

"The man can die very well without you."

"That is exactly what he ought not to do."

"But I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of doing as you wish."

"Very well, I will go and ask the admiral."

"You must wait till he is up."

"Death does not wait, captain." So saying, Père Zephyrin went down into the Duke de Beaufort's room. The prince was shaving.

"Excuse me, my lord, if I come at so early an hour," said the chaplain.

"At whatever hour he may come, Père Zephyrin is always welcome," said the duke.

"Thanks, my Lord."

"What do you wish, reverend father? Something very important, since you come so early about it."

"It is something very important, indeed, my lord; a favour I wish to ask you."

"Which I am ready to grant. Speak, I am listening."

"One of our sailors on board the *Thérèse* is very ill, and desires the succours of religion, and I am come to ask leave of you to go to him."

"But to be able to do that, I must stop the whole fleet, which would keep us back two hours!"

"Two hours are less in eternity than two drops of water in the ocean, my lord. The salvation of a soul created in the image of God depends, perhaps, upon your decision."

The prince had just finished dressing. "What time is it, father?"

"Five o'clock."

"How long would it take you to go in a good boat to the *Thérèse*?"

"About three quarters of an hour."

"What kind of weather is it this morning?"

"Beautiful weather, although the sea is rather rough."

"We shall see," replied the duke, and, throwing a cloak over his shoulders, he went on deck.

"The sea is terribly rough, father, said the duke. I would not allow you to expose your life thus in a mere boat."

"There is no fear, my lord; the sea knows me well, and the guardian angel of the sick man will protect me."

"You persist then."

"I beseech you, my lord, allow me."

"Very well. Go, and may God protect you!"

At the same moment the fleet was stopped, and Père Zephyrin jumped into a boat, in which twelve volunteers were already seated, who began to row vigorously towards the *Thérèse*.

The boat scarcely swerved; it seemed to glide over the waves, leaving behind a white foam. The Duke de Beaufort followed with a glass the progress of these brave men, who, to save a soul, did not mind risking their lives. Courage and self-devotion! The whole of a sailor is comprised in these two words.

At last Père Zephyrin got alongside of the *Thérèse*. As he went on board all the sailors took off their caps—the sentinels presented arms—the captain came himself to conduct him to the sick man, who was in the infirmary.

"God be praised!" cried he, as he saw the captain enter, bringing with him the priest, "God be praised! And may God bless you, father!"

He was a brave sailor, who had often met Père Zephyrin; the father recognised him, and expressed to him those hopes of recovery which our lips often pronounce in presence of the dying, even when our heart does not respond to them.

"You come just at the right time, father; I feel I am going to die," said the sick sailor.

"I have seen people worse than you recover after all. One must never despair."

"I don't despair; but I feel that I must get ready to go to a country where every body goes, but from which nobody comes back. That is to say, I don't think they——"

"Well my friend, since you asked for me I am ready to hear you." Then the sick man began his confession, which did not last five minutes. He seemed so piously resigned, and so generously sacrificed his life to God, that his confessor said, while administering to him—"Now, my friend, you can go whenever God calls you; you are quite prepared."

Upon a bed near to that of the dying man who had called for the assistance of God's minister, was another sailor, who, not being so ill, and having less faith, had laughed at his comrade for being so impatient to see a priest.

"Absolution wont prevent you dying," said he.

"Perhaps not," replied the other; "at all events it will prevent me from dying badly; and, if I had any advice to give you, it would be to do as I am going to do."

"To confess!—I, Pécard—surely you are joking!"

"There have been cleverer fellows than we who have confessed themselves before now, and have not been any the worse for it."

At that moment Père Zephyrin entered; he had now been three quarters of an hour on board the *Thérèse*. "I am going back again to the admiral's vessel," said he to the impenitent sailor; "wont you, too, take advantage of the opportunity?"

"I am not ill enough for that."

"All the better; you are in a more fit state to make a confession."

"I shall see later."

"Later ! perhaps then it may be too late ; better now than never."

"What should I have to say ? I have neither killed nor stolen. I have always behaved like a brave and an honest sailor."

"So much the better, your confession will be the sooner over."

"If it would not inconvenience you too much, father, to come to-morrow at the same time."

"Supposing there were no to-morrow for you ?"

"Well, in that case, I should not want a confessor ; all would be over."

"In this world, but not in the next ; believe me, my friend, to-day is yours—take advantage of it."

"And, besides," said the other sailor, joining his exhortations to those of the priest, "if you knew how much good a worthy confession and absolution does one, you would not hesitate a moment. Besides, the father is right ; one ought never to put off till to-morrow what can be easily done to-day, for our hours are numbered. Now then, Pécard, you have lived like a good sailor, you ought not to die like a miscreant. That is all I can say."

"Very well, as both of you wish it, I must wish it too," said Pécard, who, after some preparation, commenced his confession. After it was over, "indeed our comrade was right," said he to the Capucin when he prepared to go. "Confession is a pill which, once swallowed, does one uncommon good."

The sea was still rough ; but, instead of having one angel guardian, he had two on his way back. The boat reached safely the admiral's vessel.

That evening the Duke de Beaufort received to dinner all the officers of his vessel. Père Zephyrin, with a joyful heart at having done his duty, was at his right hand ; the captain was on his left. The

meal was as usual seasoned by wit and champagne; for the Duke de Beaufort, the brother and friend of his officers, preferred joyous friendly meetings to the stiffness of cold etiquette; he possessed the rare faculty of making every body around him at home.

"By the way, father," said he to the Capucin while dessert was coming in, "you have told us nothing of your morning's expedition. I am sure the account of it would interest these gentlemen." At the Prince's invitation, the Capucin briefly recounted, but much better than we have done, dear reader, his arrival on board the *Thérèse*, the scene with the two sailors, and his return to the admiral's vessel.

"Full success!" said the Duke. "I am not surprised at this; you are accustomed to overcome hearts, and to sway the consciences of men."

The Capucin bowed an acknowledgment of these praises, justified by the affection of all ranks of sailors which he had won, and said—"I forgot, my lord, to give you the messages these poor sailors intrusted me with."

"I am ready to receive them, reverend father."

"The two sailors to whom I administered the last sacraments told me to express, in the most lively terms, their gratitude to your royal highness."

"I only did my duty."

"They owe you, my lord, a sacred debt. They will pray God to pay it for them."

"Brave men! Do you hear that?" cried the Duke, glancing at the captain on his left. "You would have deprived me of a great satisfaction if I had not been there to give the order which you refused to give."

"Faith, my lord," said the captain, I will frankly tell you, that I did not dare to take upon myself

the responsibility of stopping a fleet in full sail for one sailor !”

“ If the signal had denoted that the spiritual assistance of our reverend father was required for an officer, what would you have done ? ”

“ I should have considered the matter more attentively.”

“ Very well, if the same signal had said it was for an admiral, for a duke, for the Duke de Beaufort, for instance ? ”

“ Ah ! then, my lord,” said the captain, “ I should not have hesitated a quarter of a second ! ”

“ You would immediately have given the order which the Father desired ? ”

“ No doubt, my lord.”

“ And you would have done right, just the same as you have done wrong, in refusing to a simple sailor what you would have granted to me ; for remember, sir, before God, who is master of us all, the soul of a poor sailor is as precious as that of an admiral, were he a prince of the blood.” After saying these words with a firm voice, the Duke rose, took his neighbour’s arm, and followed by his officers, went on deck.

Shortly after this incident the Duke perished bravely under the walls of Candia.

AN OLD CAMPAIGNER.

It was a beautiful evening in the summer of 1808 or 1809—the precise date is of little consequence—when we were all assembled, father, mother, and children, on the wide steps of the entrance to the chateau, conversing cheerfully, and waiting for the hour of supper; for in those days this was a usual meal in the provinces. The sun was slowly disappearing behind the hills of the Côte d'Or, and his farewell rays lighted up the lovely villages of the plain, whilst those in the mountains were already enveloped in mist and gloom. The whole country was alive with that buzz of movement and life which always precedes the hour of sleep to man, and of repose to nature. Not a road but had its well-filled wagon surrounded by reapers, with sickles on their shoulders, and followed by gleaners with their burdens. Not a path, bush or ruin, but had its voice of childhood, its song of birds, or its distant echo. Here, the heifers slowly followed the windings of a grassy rivulet; there, the lambs hastened along a straight path, amidst clouds of dust. Then, as by degrees these movements ceased, and sounds became more distant, were heard the bells of eight or ten villages, reminding the peaceful inhabitants that their last thoughts ought to be those of prayer, of thankfulness to God for the benefits of the past day, and of confidence in Him for the hopes of the morrow.

Of all the villages around, that which we inhabited was, without exception, the prettiest, the most flourishing, and most populous. On the north it was bounded by an extensive prairie, through which ran a little river, whose whole course was marked

by rows of willows and poplars. To the south was a large and thick belt of forest, beyond which we could see the Alpine mountains, crowned by Mont Blanc; within these limits were fertile fields and vineyards, surrounded by hedges of honeysuckle, and planted with luxuriant fruit trees. Part of the village was grouped round the church, a graceful construction of the fifteenth century, and the other half stretched along the road which was formerly the post route from Dijon to Châlons-sur-Saône. Here and there were several mills and hamlets, the former noisily pursuing their work on the banks of the little river, the others quietly reposing on the borders of the great forest. As to the château, it was built on the top of a little hill, from whence the eye could embrace the whole of this tableau, at once graceful and soothing.

"It must be time to close the gate," said my father, turning to me. "We cannot expect any more poor peasants to come after this hour, and the gardener must have finished watering the plants; go and tell him to bring the keys, and to shut up, while we are here; but do not disturb him if he is busy."

I ran to the kitchen garden, and saw in the distance old Nicolas moving about—a watering-pot in each hand—through a bed of peas. I took care, however, not to interrupt him in his work, for several times before when I had done so he had received me with somewhat brusque politeness, so much love had he for his dear vegetables. As to the flowers, he cared less for them, and his indifference in this respect was partly owing to his ignorance on the subject. When we asked him the name of any plant in the garden, he generally answered, "Monsieur, or Mademoiselle, will see when it is in flower." These answers greatly delighted us chil-

dren, and we often amused ourselves at his expense.

I went back and told my father, that father Nicolas was still at work. "Very well! we will wait for him," said he." Then turning towards my mother, he added, "I should like much, my dear, to find an old soldier, with a small pension of his own, to which I could make a little addition, and who would accept of his lodging and his food, in return for opening our great gate in the morning and closing it at night. Do not you think, my children, it would look well to have an old invalid for a porter?"

We were all of this opinion, I more than the others, for I anticipated at once that the old soldier would tell me stories of battles, and make me wooden sabres.

At this moment we heard the sound of a slow regular step on the hard sand of the court-yard; it approached gradually nearer, and, before we could communicate our conjectures to one another, a soldier appeared at the bottom of the steps where we were assembled.

"Is the ci-devant Count here?" asked the man in a jovial familiar tone. "I should like to wish him good evening."

My father got up, saying, "Here I am, comrade; what do you want with me?"

"What do I want? why to squeeze your hand, and to tell you how glad I am to see you have returned to the country, since I am come back also. Thanks, say I, to the nation which gave me my leave from service, and sent you your passport to reinstate you in your château. Captain, I salute you!"

A servant just then entered with a light, announcing that supper was ready, and we could now dis-

tinguish the features and costume of our singular visitor. He was a man of fifty, or thereabouts; tall, still vigorous, and of a really imposing appearance. He wore the uniform of the soldiers of the Republic, which the celebrated Vernet has immortalized; a culotte of a white cloth, long white gaiters reaching to the knee, a blue coat faced with white, made so as to allow the waistcoat to be seen, and a small hat ornamented with a red woollen tassel. He had his hat in his hand, not exactly from respect, but because the weather was hot, so that as the light shone on his face we caught a glimpse of a bald forehead, seamed with many a scar, a weather-beaten and wrinkled skin, and a pair of black moustaches, such as are only seen now among the National Guard.

"What! is it you, my poor Margalet?" exclaimed my father, holding out his hand to the old soldier. "From whence come you? I thought you dead."

"And so I ought to have been, captain,* but it was otherwise arranged; I might also have been a marshal of the empire, only unfortunately I did not know how to sign my name, and so I remained a private soldier. Now I have my dismissal, and my cross of honour, which is worth two hundred and fifty francs; so I said to myself, I will go and live in my own country; with my parents, if they are living, or with my captain, if they are dead; and here I am."

"And you are welcome, my old friend; go and get your supper, and then take some rest; to-morrow we will talk over what will be best for you to do.

* My father had been made a general during the emigration; but Margalet recognised no services but those rendered to the nation, so he always called my father captain.

As for myself, a few moments before you arrived I was speaking to my children of my wish to have an old soldier with me, so you see we are of the same mind. Now good night, my brave comrade."

My father then told me, in a low tone, to conduct Margalet to the offices, and give orders that he should have his meals alone.

When we were all assembled at supper, we put a thousand questions to my father relative to Margalet. He then told us as follows:—

During the year 1774 or 1775, he had received several recruits for his regiment, and Margalet among the number. He was then a fine youth of eighteen, and on entering the corps had shown so much willingness and intelligence, that my father formed a great friendship for him, and helped his advancement. Afterwards, when my father quitted his regiment for the rank of standard-bearer in the gendarmerie de Lunéville, he was obliged to separate from him; but before leaving recommended him to his best friend, the Marquis d'Apchier, who took the command of his company. When the revolution broke out, M. d'Apchier emigrated, as did many other officers in the regiment, and my father had heard no more of Margalet. "But," continued he, "we will call him in during breakfast, and make him relate to us the remainder of his history. If you are good, you shall be allowed to listen."

On the morrow I arose earlier than usual, to seek for Margalet. I soon perceived him sitting smoking his pipe on the parapet of a little bridge which separated the gate of the château from the avenue leading to the church. His looks were fixed on the village, and two large tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Do you know, my young sir, that it is now thirty-five years, in the month of April next, since I saw that steeple," said he to me in a voice of assumed

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indifference, but that trembled in spite of himself, "and in that time how many of my friends and relatives have taken their departure for the other world! I have just been making a tour of the country, and at all the doors I knocked at no one answered me, 'present!' Look, there are some reapers coming; I wager they will not recognise me."

That was true, indeed; these people wished me good morning, calling me by my name, but not one took any notice of poor Margalet, whose face was again overcast. Then he suddenly rose up, shook the cinders from his pipe, and murmured between his teeth, "In the end what does all this signify? my captain has recognised me, I ask no more; and if there are any inns in the country I shall soon make friends."

He then took my hand, and we walked round the château together, which was quite new to him, for my father had built it since his return from emigration. Margalet made many criticisms on the building, if I remember right, and finished by telling me about the battle of Marengo and the death of General Desaix, whom he had supported in his arms when a shot from the Austrian army terminated his short and brilliant career.

I was just going to hear about Austerlitz when my tutor discovered me taking this lesson in history without his leave, and as he was not acquainted with the professor, he did not judge it safe to leave me in his hands. Margalet made a grimace on seeing a cassock, and as I was going I heard him pronounce an expression under his long moustache, which, though I did not understand the sense, seemed to me somewhat contemptuous.

After our breakfast, and as my father had promised, Margalet was admitted to the dining-room.

There, having drank two large cups of wine, which my youngest sister poured out for him, he related to us his history, which was much the same as that of most soldiers of that epoch. He intermixed his recital with many revolutionary maxims, and protestations of fidelity to the emperor and the republic, which were one and the same to him; he blamed my father for having allied himself to a Prussian family instead of marrying a French citizen; and added a few words of criticism on my education, because it was confided to a ———, and here Margalet repeated the word I had heard him pronounce in the morning when he saw the priest. But all this was said with so much goodnature, and there appeared so much that was honourable and right at bottom in the old man, that my father still kept to his resolution of taking him into his service as porter at the gate.

When this proposition was made to him, the face of the old soldier shone with a ray of joy and gratitude which made him look really handsome. He approached my father, took his hand, and pressed it to his heart, saying, "Captain, Margalet thanks you! He would have accepted a much lower place, but when you respect his cross of honour and his scars so far as to make him porter of your château, you have left him nothing more to desire. I accept it, then, on two conditions; the first is, that I may continue to wear my cockade; the second, that I may be free not to go to mass. So now long live the emperor and my captain!"

Behold, then, Margalet installed in his new office, and my father satisfied with the good action he had performed.

Margalet was active, punctual, laborious, vigilant; he threatened with so much gravity, and kept so good a watch over all, that no one was tempted to brave him, or endeavour to escape his penetrating

eye. Like his idol the emperor, he was everywhere at once, and notwithstanding left nothing unfinished. At all hours of the day he was the stimulus of idle workmen and the terror of mischievous children. It was these last who, out of respect occasioned by their fear, added the title of father to the name of Margalet, and when one of them cried out, "There is father Margalet! make your escape," in a few seconds not a guilty child was to be seen.

My sisters and I were not always treated with indulgence by the old soldier any more than others. He was generally kind to us; but if we committed any fault, my father was instantly informed of it. On the other hand, when I was well behaved, we passed many happy hours together, the remembrance of which is still endeared to me.

There was one thing in Margalet—and a serious one indeed it was—which much afflicted my parents. His antipathy to religion, which as yet nothing had been able to overcome,—neither advice, example, nor even prayers; he listened to all, but answered nothing except in jokes, and his spiritual blindness seemed obstinate. On one occasion my father took a journey to Paris, and on his return told Margalet he had seen the emperor at mass. The old soldier only answered, "I, also, have seen him."

Priests were objects of horror to him, the reason of which he would not explain; he manifested indeed some slight regard for my tutor; but this was only because he had one day jumped into a pond to save me when I was near drowning. Margalet said then, "Well, that is a brave man; 'tis a pity he is not a grenadier!"

After many attempts, my excellent mother, who had the veteran's conversion greatly at heart, gave up everything but praying for him, when a circumstance, seemingly accidental, led to that change

which all our wishes and endeavours had been unable to effect.

Margalet lived by himself in a small house, attached to the château, from which he could see all that passed in the courts, orchards, and even in the woods, which being then but young plantations, were easily seen through. The old soldier had nicely arranged what he called his sentry-box, adding to the rustic furniture my father had given him a military trophy, composed of his firelock and sabre, his little tricolored hat, and a pair of grenadier's epaulettes. Then he had ornamented the whitewashed walls with a collection of military pictures, representing the principal battles he had taken part in, and portraits of the generals he most admired: that of the emperor, surmounted with a crown of laurel, occupied a place by itself, at the head of his bed, above the military trophy.

Among the old customs that the blessings of peace had re-established in our country was one which came peculiarly home to the sympathies and desires of the people—the procession of Corpus Christi and that of the Rogation Days. Before the Revolution it had been usual for all processions to come to the chapel of the château, and at the return of order and peace this custom had been revived. During the time Margalet had been in our service, therefore, he had several times had the vexation of seeing the cross and banners pass before his cottage. On these days the old soldier took care to double-lock his door, in order to protest, with all his power, against what he called the return of superstition; and the week following this ceremony he was always less communicative, as well as somewhat more severe in the exercise of his duty; for myself, I never ventured to seek his company at those times.

About three years had thus passed away, when the time for the procession of the Rogations came round again. We were all assembled, masters, children, and veterans, at the end of the avenue, awaiting the procession, in order to accompany it to the chapel, where it always made its first station. The sky on this day was of a dazzling brilliancy; the earth, rich in blessings, had but one voice to bless God for his numerous gifts, and every countenance was irradiated with gratitude and joy. The procession slowly advanced towards us, along a road bordered on each side by hedges of honeysuckles in flower. It was a ravishing spectacle, that double row of greyheaded men and young blooming girls, their banners floating in the breeze, flowing white veils contrasting with the green verdure, and above all the Sign of our Redemption shining in the rays of the sun, which were reflected on it. We took our places in the midst of our tenants, who preceded us, and with chants and prayers arrived at the gate of the château. What was our surprise and emotion when we perceived old Margalet standing, hat in hand, awaiting the procession, as if he intended to introduce it into the park. His demeanour was grave, his attitude respectful, and his look dignified, though full of feeling. It was easy to see that he was under the influence of some powerful conviction. When the priest passed before him Margalet bent profoundly, then took his place by my father's side, who pressed his hand.

The procession continued to advance towards the chapel, following the winding alleys of the park. When it had arrived, the priest mounted the steps which led to the entrance, and then turning towards us, he pronounced, from that elevated spot, a benediction on all the country round. At that moment I looked at the old republican soldier, who

had taken part in the arrest of Pope Pius VI., and saw two streams running down his cheeks upon his grey moustaches. What words he said I know not, nor could I see his lips move; but what prayer could have been more real than the fervent emotion which thus betrayed itself in his countenance? When the crowd arose from their knees, Margalet still remained a few moments longer in that posture; then we saw him slowly take the road to his house, carrying in his right hand one of those little crosses of white wood which had been blest for the inhabitants of the village on this festival.

My father forbade us to speak to Margalet of what had passed, and to leave him at liberty, well knowing the old soldier would confide to *him* his thoughts on this occasion. In fact, he saw him arrive a short time after, and his first words were, "Well, captain, I am one of you now; what do you say to it?"

"That I am charmed, my friend. But tell me, when did this good thought occur to you?"

"Oh! captain, it was not a mere thought, for this morning I had no intention of the kind. I had just cleaned my uniform, when suddenly, on hearing the sound of those chants, the memory of my childhood, of my mother's instructions, and of my first communion, came back upon me, and I felt myself quite overpowered. I thought I distinguished a voice, saying to me, 'Margalet, my friend, perhaps you will soon die; it would be well if you thought a little about the good God.' Then I went out, and without knowing what I did, found myself on the road with the procession, hat in hand."

Then he approached my father, and lowering his voice, added, "But that is not all, captain; I wish now to make my confession, and if you could arrange that with M. le Curé, you would do me a great service."

"It is all right, my friend ; go to the church, place yourself on your knees near the confessional, and leave all to our good God. He will finish that which He has so well begun."

Margalet followed this advice ; and, after a week consecrated to a general confession, he came to beg we would all attend Mass on the morrow, as he wished to communicate.

It was a touching spectacle that communion ; and though it is now more than thirty years since, it is still vividly present to my memory. Margalet was full of joy ; and when he returned to the castle with us, he said he felt far happier than the day on which he received his cross of honour from the hands of the emperor.

During all that day we talked about Margalet, and my father told me many times not to interrupt him, as no doubt he was at prayer.

In the evening a servant entered, saying, " M. le Comte, father Margalet has forgotten to close the gate as usual."

" Oh ! indeed," said my father, " he must be ill ; but let us go to his house."

The servant took a lantern ; my father followed, and I accompanied him. The door of Margalet's room was wide open. We perceived him reclining on the bed ; his sword lay by his side, and on his breast was the little white cross of the Rogations ; his countenance had an indefinable expression of calm, like that of one who had fallen asleep in peace.

My father called, but he did not answer ; he touched him, he was quite cold ; and on lifting his arm we perceived that he was dead.

" Ah ! well," said my father, " there is a man who, eight days since, would not pray for himself, and now he prays for us. My son, see how good and great is God !"

THE LAUREL BRANCH; OR, THE BRETON SAILOR'S GRAVE.

ON board the ship of war in the present day, just as in a missionary vessel, the priest—the angel-guardian of humanity and God's representative upon earth—partakes of all the dangers of our soldiers and sailors; he blesses them in their joys, comforts them in their griefs, sustains them in the trials of their vocation, and gladly bestows on them all the consolations of his sacred ministry. Himself a soldier by self-sacrifice and abnegation—a soldier of Jesus Christ—he becomes the brother-in-arms of those among whom his lot is cast. Instead of the sword which kills, he bears at his side the cross which promises eternal life. The uniform he wears is dark, but at the moment of peril he is always seen at the most dangerous post. The cross is his banner; but this banner is always to be found, in victory as in defeat, in the path of honour and of duty. In victory, it is triumphantly displayed on the altar in gratitude to God; in defeat, it serves as a shroud to the heroes who have fallen in the defence of their country.

By a decree dated 31st of March, 1852, the government re-organised definitely the service of the chaplaincy in the fleet, and thus wisely responded to one of the most legitimate needs of the French navy.

There is scarcely a single officer or sailor who has not welcomed with joy the return of the priest amongst them. All venerate and love him; less as a man and a friend, than as the representative of their holy religion—that religion which received their first smile, which wiped away their first tears, which will follow them throughout their perilous

career, which will bring them back to the haven of their country, and bless, if need be, their watery grave.

Unhappily, it has not always been so : too long our sailors, exiled from heaven, so to speak, toiled and died on the wide ocean, far from their native land, having no holy voice to speak to them of happiness to come, to soften their sufferings, to inspire them with resignation, to sanctify their last agony, and to pray over their cold remains. Energetic and generous natures in vain protested against this cruel abandonment. Some of the most illustrious men of our navy conveyed to the government the ardent wishes of their crews ; but these desires, unheeded by the authorities, were for years but as the voice crying in vain in the desert. In the year 1841, directly after the expedition of St. Helena, l'Abbé Coquereau addressed to Louis Philippe and the Minister of the Marine, a memorial which set forth the pressing necessity of re-establishing, as soon as possible, the regular chaplaincy of the navy. This petition lay buried amongst the dusty papers of the minister—perhaps was thrown into the *basket* by the hand of a prince who rested his power more on the pavement of the barricades, than on the favour of God.

Some time later, after the memorable campaign of Morocco, which enabled the Abbé Coquereau to display a brilliant courage united to a charity and self-sacrifice above all praise, this noble apostle, secretly recommending his work to God, let his voice again be heard in favour of the re-establishment of chaplains in the navy. The scenes in which he had just taken a leading part, gave additional weight to the reasons he so solidly adduced. After five years of discussion, of struggle and of perseverance, the authorities, thoroughly persuaded at last of the im-

portance of the matter in question, complied with the desire of the whole country, as represented by the French navy.

It was decided that, from that time, there should be a chaplain in every vessel where there was a general officer or a commander of a naval station, as also in all vessels destined to long and distant voyages on missions connected with scientific or political objects. For this purpose the government voted an allowance of sixty-three thousand francs, which were charged in the budget of 1847; besides this, the budget included another sum of twenty-three thousand two hundred francs, destined for the support of religion in marine establishments on shore.

At the time that the anti-Christian and anti-national state of things of which we have spoken still existed, in the month of September, 1842, M. Matthieu, a navy captain (afterwards head of the dépôt for naval maps and plans) was entrusted by government with a mission as important as it was painful. The *Marengo*, which he then commanded, had just taken over to Algiers some French troops destined to fill up the voids in our army caused by war and disease. He had received orders to bring back in return a cargo of the sick. The rigour of the climate, still more than the fortunes of war, at that time decimated our troops, as yet unaccustomed to the country; every month the ships from Bone, Algiers, and Oran, brought in hundreds of soldiers to Marseilles, with faces grown yellow from fever, and whose uncertain and trembling steps made them appear more like shadows than men. How many victims among their brothers in arms had not death gathered in during the passage? How many fresh tombs had been opened among the waves of the Mediterranean? And how many brave soldiers

among the four hundred sick, that Captain Matthieu was about to carry back to France, were destined to die on the way, and to follow the corpses of their poor comrades?

These thoughts saddened the heart of the brave captain of the *Marengo*. In the sick who were confided to him he saw, not only soldiers who had nobly paid the debt they owed to their country, but he saw Christians on the brink of the grave, and on the threshold of eternity—souls ready to appear before God's tribunal, without those holy aids which might serve them as wings to ascend to heaven. "The law," said he, in the bitterness of his noble heart, "the law which banishes religion from the Catholic vessels of France, which forbids its ministers to walk their decks, that law is a cruel, an impious, an atheistic law. I will not infringe it, because, as a soldier, I am under discipline; but I will evade it whenever I can, because, as a Christian, I am responsible for the souls of my comrades."

The rules were formal and definite. They forbade the presence of chaplains on board ship; but charity, "strong as death," according to the words of scripture, animated the heart of the commander Matthieu. It was this charity which, having inspired him with the pious wish of procuring the succours of religion for his poor sick, led him to bend his steps towards the Episcopal palace at Algiers. Monseigneur Dupuch was then occupied with the details of those great works which he established, and which in the end ruined his fortune and his health.

"Monseigneur," said the captain, "I come to ask of you an accomplice, to share with me the merit of a good action."

"What is it about, captain?" replied the bishop.

"It is to procure religious consolations for those unfortunate sick whom I am now going to take over

to France, and many of whom may probably die at sea."

"That seems difficult, captain, for you know better than I, the strict rules which exist."

"But it is not impossible. To will is to be able; you know that better than any one, Monseigneur."

"Alas, less than any one can I do all the good I should wish to do," replied the humble prelate.

"The ship which I have the honour of commanding," continued the captain, "is to receive on board, to-morrow, four hundred sick soldiers to be conveyed back to France."

"I know it, captain, and I grieve to think that many of them will never see their beloved country again, and therefore will not have the blessings and consolations of the minister of religion at their last hour."

"That depends upon you and upon me, Monseigneur."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"How then?"

"Why thus. Could not the *Marengo* offer an asylum to one of your priests, who himself requires a change to his native air?"

"One of those priests especially that the men have often seen performing their duties on the battle-field, amongst the wounded, and in the hospitals among the dying?" added the Bishop.

"You perfectly understand me, Monseigneur."

"Your idea seems to be an inspiration of Providence."

"And I think, Monseigneur, we should be false to Providence, and wicked to our brethren, if we did not carry it into execution."

"And that directly, for the time is short."

"Yes, Monseigneur, we sail to-morrow."

"Well, come again this evening, and by that time I shall have found the priest."

There was, at that time, an energetic and devoted priest whose health had suffered from the arduous labours of his office, the Abbé Vazillier, and whom the soldiers loved and respected for the numberless proofs of courage and charity which he had displayed. It was this worthy priest that Monseigneur Dupuch presented to Captain Matthieu, when the commander of the *Marengo* returned at the appointed hour in the evening.

"Here is the *accomplice* you asked me for," said he with a smile.

"There will be three of us, Monseigneur, who will be sharers in this good action," replied the captain.

"So as to insure the success of the snare we have laid for a cruel and impious law," added the bishop, "M. l'Abbé Vazillier will go on board your vessel as a sick friend; will you allow this, captain?"

"I shall feel it an honour to receive him under that title."

"In that case, M. l'Abbé will eat at your table."

"And will share my humble cabin."

"When do we leave?" said the Abbé.

"To-morrow at break of day," replied the captain; "but at ten o'clock this evening we must be on board."

"I am at your service, captain."

"In the mean time, as you are now under my orders, you will do me the honour of dining with me."

The day following the *Marengo* prepared to set sail for France. "From sunrise," says the Abbé Vazillier, "I was at my post, and I contemplated with the officers the long file of boats filled with soldiers, as they glided along, scarcely leaving any trace upon the silvery and polished surface of the

bay of Algiers. But as they approached, my heart grieved at the sight of their bandaged limbs, of their thin faces, whose livid hue, contrasted so sorrowfully with the azure of the waves and the soft transparency of morning. It was truly a sad spectacle—this procession of dying men going to crave new life of their mother country—of the fair land of France! Oh I see them still ascending with difficulty the ladder of the ship; I still hear the stifled groans escaping from their panting breasts. It seemed as if I also, after seeing and pitying them, and trying to realize their sufferings, felt myself unable to breathe so freely. Still I felt happy and proud in seeing myself on the deck of their noble vessel, whose sails were already unfurled to bear us back to our beloved country. I know not what secret voice whispered to me that this passage would give rise to emotions hitherto unknown to me.”

There were seven hundred sailors on board the *Marengo*, all vying with each other in the services and care bestowed upon the sick of their brothers-in-arms. They gave a helping hand to those who could scarcely move—to those who were paralysed they offered their robust shoulders. Devoted attendants of the sick, they had a good word for all, a word of consolation, a word of hope. “Courage, brothers,” said they, “you will soon see France, your native villages, your families. There you will find health and restoration. The sun of France, you know, always cures African fevers; courage, brothers, you will soon be at the end of your sufferings. The air of France is soft to those whose faces have been bronzed by the powder and sun of Algeria—it will be like a kiss on your cheeks from your grateful country. Courage, brothers!” Thus said the brave sailors, who found the eloquence of poetry in the zeal of their charity. For compassion to the struggles

and sufferings of others, none can be compared to those hardy men, whose lives are one continual struggle. He knows the weight who has borne it himself. The heart of the sailor, under its rude covering, is as a diamond enclosed in a pebble.

The battery, with its port-holes, was arranged in admirable order for the sick. The most suffering were placed in beds along the thick walls of the ship; three hundred other invalids were placed in hammocks. The spectacle was a strange and impressive one.

The first hours of the day were beautiful; the sea was so calm, one would have said that it wished to still the waves in order to render the sick men's passage more easy. But, as the sun got higher, the sky, at first so clear, began to darken over. Captain Matthieu then looked anxiously at every point of the horizon. "I very much fear," said he to the Abbé Vazillier, "I very much fear a gale to-night. I should be so grieved on account of our poor soldiers."

"It is to be hoped that your fears may not be realised."

"I would it were so, but we sailors are too well acquainted with the ocean not to know beforehand the approach of its wrath; we shall certainly have a storm—but a danger foreseen is half avoided."

Accustomed from childhood to read the clouds and waves, Captain Matthieu was not mistaken in the present case. At sunset a long black line darkened the horizon, the breeze freshened, the sea became more and more boisterous, and the waves threatened each moment to wash over the ship. The captain foreseeing this reluctantly gave orders to shut all the portholes. By this precaution the hospital, which, as we have said, was in the gun-battery, was preserved from the waves which would otherwise have laid it under water, but it was also

unhappily deprived of the air so indispensable for sick people, especially when, as in this instance, crowded closely together. Soon after the battery became like a hot furnace: consternation was upon all faces, and anguish in every heart; deep groans, heart-rending cries, broken sobs were heard on all sides: it was a scene of distress which it is impossible to describe. In other circumstances, I have witnessed all the horrors of a storm at sea; I have seen the furious winds carry away the masts and bulwarks; I have seen the lightning illuminate the watery abysses into which our vessel was every moment plunging; I have heard the despairing cries of the passengers mingling with the hissing of the ropes, and the frightful roar of the waves; but of none of these scenes, the thought of which makes one shudder with fear, have I preserved such a remembrance as of that night of agony, when I beheld in this vessel four hundred sick soldiers, raising themselves with difficulty from their pallets to implore a little air for their burning chests, a little water to satisfy their thirst, or else praying for a speedy end to their fearful sufferings by death.

The Abbé Vazillier, ready to answer every call, had not gone to bed. Captain Matthieu who had also remained up ready to answer the first signal, was sitting beside him, talking with some officers, when the physician came to say that a soldier who was extremely ill was anxious to speak to the priest whom he had seen that morning on deck.

“My dear sir,” said the captain to the priest, in presence of the officers who surrounded him, “I sincerely applaud the thought which made you embark with your old friend. Your presence will be a great consolation to the soldier who asks for you.” And then, upon a remark of the physician, he added, “Take this flask; it appears that you will have

great need of it, to enable you to accomplish your sorrowful mission."

This precaution was not useless, for hardly had the priest put his foot on the first step of the staircase leading to this burning crater, than he felt beaten back by the yellow vapour, charged with acrid odours and deleterious effluvia which issued from it. In the battery, which was lighted up by lamps placed at intervals, neither cannons, nor beds, nor sick men could be discerned through this condensed cloud which enveloped everything, and in which breathing was well-nigh impossible. "After having plucked up my courage," says the Abbé Vazillier, "I tried to force a passage through this fog of pestilential smoke. To walk upright was impossible; the ceiling was hardly as high as myself, and the men who were suspended in beds had only three feet between them and it. The way was as long as it was difficult, and the dying man who wanted me was quite at the other end, that is more than thirty yards distant. I tried to bend myself, but at each step I struck my forehead against some object, or overturned one of the sick men, who, terrified and half-naked, had quitted their beds and were wandering up and down like unquiet ghosts.

"Half-suffocated, but sustained by strength from on high, I dragged myself onwards, and continued my way to the spot where I heard a voice saying, 'This way, Monsieur l'Abbé—this way.' It was the voice of an honest sailor who was watching by the bedside of the poor man, and who, after having cordially pressed his hand, immediately retired.

"I took hold in my turn of that burning hand. 'You wished to see me, my friend,' said I; 'here I am.' 'Welcome, a thousand times welcome,' said he. I looked instinctively for a seat, for I felt myself utterly exhausted, but there was none. I bent

over the bed of the sick man, in order to catch the feeble sounds he uttered.

“Poor young man! Death, which had spared him in all his encounters with the Arabs, was now to claim him just when his term of service was ended, and when the spire of his native village, the object of all his dreams and all his hopes, shone before his longing eyes.

“Drawn by lot, in the year 1834, he had left in the heart of his dear Brittany, an aged father, a venerable mother, a little sister—a pale rose who still bore on her forehead the white crown of her first communion; beloved ones who were ardently awaiting his return. . . . Poor people—to wait is it not too often to despair!

“His adieu to his country and to his family had been grave and solemn. ‘My child,’ his father said to him, ‘I know not if we shall meet again in this world, for I am very old, and the soil of Algeria is very thorny for the feet of our young soldiers. But no matter; walk always straight before you, like a good and loyal Breton, on the road of honour and probity; let your life be that of an honest man, of a good Christian, and of a brave soldier. Be always faithful to God, for he who is faithful to God is faithful to his country. Never forget the duties of religion. Often think of God, so that he may not forget you at your last hours; think sometimes of us too; and we shall meet again, my child—if not here below, at least in a better world.’

“‘My child,’ his mother added, ‘always love the Blessed Virgin, the mother of our sweet Saviour; invoke her intercession morning and evening; she will lessen the sadness and hardships of your soldier’s life, she will lighten the weight of your burden, and protect you from the balls of the Bedouin; she will bless your last sigh by the hand of

a priest, when God will call you to himself. Invoke also with affection St. Anne, the good patroness of our parish ; she will protect you. . . . Adieu, my child ; carry always about you this blest medal—it will bring happiness to you.’ So saying, she hung a silver medal of the Immaculate Virgin round his neck, and embraced him for the last time.

“ He had, as I have said, escaped all the dangers of the African war, and now that he had paid his country’s debt, and was returning with open heart and arms to his paternal hearth, he was about to die in the vessel which was bearing him back to his mother’s embrace. Poor young man !

“ ‘ She is waiting for me,’ said he, ‘ she is expecting me—but she will see me no more—she will not even have the consolation of coming to weep over my tomb. I am to be pitied—am I not father ? ’

“ ‘ No, my child, if God wills that it should be so, you will die in his merciful hands, and he can make up to you for every deprivation and trial.’ Religion alone could soften such deep grief, and calm such poignant regrets, and religion had taken deep root in the heart of the young Breton.”

With what avidity did he not gether from the lips of the priest the great truths of our holy faith, the sublime promises of hope which it holds out to the dying Christian ! How his heart, reconciled to God, elevated itself above the inseparable terrors of death ! With what affection, tearing himself from all earthly regrets, did he not now contemplate heaven, that true country where, in the bosom of God himself, he would soon see, never to be separated from them, those dear ones whom he was no more to meet on earth ! What a sweet and calm serenity overspread his countenance, when the solemn words of pardon had fallen upon his soul,

already purified by the generous sacrifice he had made of his life ! " You have filled me with peace," said he to the minister of God, " I am ready to obey the call of God ; but do not leave me, I pray you ; stay with me till the last."

There is, generally, between the agony and the final moment of departure, an interval of calm. The dying man, taking advantage of this moment of respite, talked much of his father, of his mother, and, above all, of his sister. The latter, it appeared, was soon to be settled in life ; two young men of the village had asked her hand, and they only waited for his return to decide. " My choice," said he, " was already made. I should have given my sister's hand to P—— ; he is not so rich as the other, but he is a better workman ; he is less handsome, but a better Christian ; he is younger in looks, but he has more experience, and is more solid ; and," added he, weeping, " he will love my old parents more ; he will take my place, and will assist them in their old age. Oh, father, promise me to write to my family, when I shall be no more."

" I promise you, my child."

" Thanks, thanks, father. Let my sister know her dying brother's last wish. You must tell them all that I die in your arms as a good Christian, after having received all the sacraments of the Church. But do not tell them——." Here the young Breton's voice trembled, his eyes shut as before some unpleasant vision, and with his right hand he pointed to the porthole—" Oh do not tell them that I died at sea !"

The sea had become calm, and the morning breeze brought back fresh air and life to the miserable inmates of the ship.

The young dying Breton could have touched the

sea-water with the tips of his fingers from his bed. He raised himself up and looked out anxiously at the waves as they dashed one against another—"My God," said he, turning his face to the priest, "this then will be my grave—no coffin—no tomb—no cross. Oh, do not tell my mother of it!"

And thus in this awful moment when life was fast-ebbing away, the poor young man, carrying back his recollections to the days of his childhood, thought of his village, and its churchyard, close to the house of God, and to his father's cottage; he thought of the creepers encompassing the tombstone, on the black wooden cross rising above the flowers, he thought of the spot he should have chosen for his last resting place; and still the sea seemed to murmur, "Thy body belongs to me." "But wherefore this fruitless grief," said he, after a moment's thought and silence, "my soul belongs to God, who can find my body even in the depths of the sea. His will be done." And then calm and resigned he awaited the final hour, which was now fast approaching.

The Abbé, kneeling near his bed, recited in a low voice the solemn prayers for the departing soul. In an hour all was over.

To spare the sick men the sight of the funeral preparations, the body was secretly carried to the deck. According to the usual custom it was wrapped in a winding sheet of white cloth, which covered the bullets attached to his feet, and then placed upon a board, it awaited the last rites which were to take place at sunset.

Meanwhile the Abbé Vazillier fulfilled all the functions of a Navy Chaplain, and continued his labours in the sick gallery, without any one even thinking of it, his presence being everywhere wel-

comed by the sick men, and the consolations of his ministry gladly resorted to, while the brave sailors, witnessing his charitable and devoted spirit, praised him in the most enthusiastic terms, and called him the "Captain of the good God."

The excellent captain of the "*Marengo*" secretly rejoiced at these testimonies rendered to the minister of religion. In his cabin, above a beautiful picture representing Raphael's "*Vierge à la chaise*," was hung a beautiful *laurel branch* which Captain Matthieu had gathered himself from the tomb of Virgil, on his last voyage to Naples.

"If you have no objection," said the Abbé to him, "this branch which has grown on the tomb of one of the greatest of heathen poets, shall now minister to one of the most solemn ceremonies of the Christian religion."

"I ask nothing better," said the captain; "what is it you propose?"

"To use this branch for sprinkling the holy water on the mortal remains of our young Breton."

"That is a poetical idea."

"And a holy one, I trust, at the same time."

"Like the life and death of the brave man we have just lost."

The last rays of the sun were fading away, throwing their golden tints upon the sails of the *Marengo*. The greatest silence was observed on board; every countenance wore the marks of the greatest recollection,—for all hearts were profoundly affected by the scene that was about to take place. Around the coarse winding-sheet which covered the bed, the captain of the *Marengo*, with his officers and crew, stood motionless, their heads uncovered, and in deep silence. Some of the sick men, friends of the young Breton, had crawled from the hospital to the deck to

assist in paying the last duties to their deceased comrade. A guard of honour formed by the men of the regiment to which the youth had belonged, carried arms, and gave an appearance at once religious and military to this sad scene. The boatswain of the vessel who had once been a choir boy in his parish church, accepted the office of clerk. All being prepared, the Abbé, holding in his hand the laurel branch, recited slowly and with emotion the prayers which the church has consecrated to the burial of the dead. All present followed them with heart and lips. The sounds of the funeral psalmody, mingling with the dash and swell of the waves, and the evening breeze which sighed among the cordage of the ship, harmonised well with the solemn scene. When the prayers were finished, the ship's bell gave a last toll, the priest, raising his eyes to heaven, pronounced with emotion that word of hope which is also the last farewell of religion : *May he rest in peace* ; then lowering the laurel branch on the winding-sheet at his feet, he threw holy water on the remains which the sea was about to claim. The commander, the officers, and the sailors, by turns, took the laurel in their hands, and fulfilled this last sad duty. Then an old sailor who filled, at this time, the place of sexton, looked at the Abbé Vazil-lier to see, by his sign, if all was ready. The latter replied by a look, "It is time." The priest threw himself on his knees before the porthole which was now opened ; all the crew bent down reverently, and the sailor, lifting up the board with a trembling hand, lowered it into the bosom of the deep.

Captain (afterwards Admiral) Matthieu carefully preserved the laurel of Virgil, which seemed to remind him every day of the immortal palms which flourish in heaven for the elect of God.

As the young Breton had requested, the Abbé Vazillier wrote to his family, giving the full details of the Christian soldier's death. Six months afterwards, his sister, obeying the last wishes of her dying brother, was united to the husband he had chosen for her.

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THE WATCHING OF THE ARMOUR.

It is late, and the night is cold and wet: it is the 13th of February, 1855. A strong north wind blows on the coast of Toulon; yet, notwithstanding, a frigate—elegant and coquettish as her name—*La Sémillante*,* prepares herself for her voyage to the East. A crow, which has no doubt wandered far from its nest, rests her black pinions on one of the ship's yards, and mingles the harsh notes of her sinister cry with the blast that whistles through the rigging. Can it be a presage of coming evil that a church bell tolls the next moment for a departing soul, and calls on us to follow it with our prayers?

At this time three men, wrapped in military cloaks, are seen threading their way through the obscure streets of the town.

France, along with her ally of England, was at this period engaged in a hand to hand struggle with the giant of the North, and was sending out her brave sons to fight, and many of them to die, in the cause which she had espoused.

Our three soldiers know what is before them; they know the hardships the brave men encounter who go to this distant land, and that disease is a powerful auxiliary to the cannon in filling the sepulchres of the dead; for this reason it is that they are about solemnly to offer themselves to God, in the chapel of the hospice at Toulon, their last resting place in France—the last, perhaps, on the road to eternity.

All three kneel down before the most Holy

* *Sémillante*, lively.

Sacrament, in order to gain strength for the coming struggle. They pour forth their heart's incense at the foot of the cross. Prayer will temper their arms and prepare them to acquit themselves as Christian soldiers in life or in death.

Ten o'clock sounds in the church tower, and still they pray. The sacristan who takes care of the chapel, comes to close the doors: he begs them to retire and take some repose, in order to prepare for the fatigues of the voyage—but they refuse. "Our rest is here," they say, "Near to God;" and one adds, in a prophetic voice—"near to God, Whom we shall soon see." "After this night," said a grenadier, holding in his fingers the beads of his chapelet, "we need not fear the waves of the sea, the scourge of sickness, or the bayonets of the enemy."

These brave men of the 83rd, so worthy to serve God and their country, remained all night in prayer—prayer which was the "Watching of Armour" of the knights of the olden time. These three, however, were not alone in adoration before the Tabernacle of the hospice chapel: Auguste Bolzinger, Lieutenant of Artillery, a member of the Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul at Metz, had preceded the soldiers in their visit to the chapel, and they now joined together as one heart and soul before God.

Bolzinger was a pious young man, loving his Maker above all things, and his neighbour as himself, bearing with enthusiasm not only the soldier's weapons, but the Saviour's Cross. Since his childhood, he had voluntarily enrolled himself under the banner of the Immaculate Virgin, and carefully preserved under his uniform her medal and scapular. With him, military courage was united to religious principle; all his actions were devoted to the service of God and his country.

Good christians and good citizens were with him synonymous terms. He who renders conscientiously to Cæsar the things which are Cæsars, forgets not to render to God the things that are God's. Faithful to God and to Cæsar, this young and brilliant officer associated in common love his earthly country and friends, with heaven his future rest, and the saints its inhabitants.

"My friends," said he to the three soldiers, who wished to yield him the first place at the altar, "all places are places of honour in the presence of God: here, at this hour, I am no longer your chief—I am your brother—the Cross levels all distinctions of high and low."

Day at length dawned: their watch was ended, and the hour of departure had arrived. Our christian soldiers rejoined their respective companies. They answered the call of their officers, and at the sound of the drum repaired to the shore for embarkation.

The *Sémillante* was a beautiful frigate, which had ploughed the ocean for many a year under the command of a brave captain named Jugan. This officer, a man in the prime of life, distinguished for his courage as well as for his nautical science, was considered one of the best seamen in the French navy, Nursed from a child on the bosom of the ocean, he had, so to say, a hammock for his cradle; the sea was his element—the deck of the frigate his hearth—the tempest his life.

The *Sémillante* thus prepared, and all her sails unfurled, was about to carry, besides her crew of three hundred and fifty men, nearly four hundred soldiers, destined to fill the voids which death had made in the ranks of our Crimean army.

It was the 14th of February. The gale had increased to a storm: the sea looked angry and

threatening. It is said that even Captain Jugan for once shewed symptoms of apprehension. He no doubt thought with anxiety on the number of precious lives committed to his charge, and would gladly have chosen a more propitious time for their departure; but the orders were explicit, and they must be obeyed. Standing at his post, with the speaking trumpet at his lips, Captain Jugan gave the signal for departure; and the *Sémillante*—impatient as an Arab horse, who is ready to start, and neighs at the presence of danger—bending her open sails to the wind, rode forth bravely on the waves. The mariners and soldiers all grouped on deck, waved a last adieu to their country's shores—to France, which they might never see again. How many hearts trembled at this moment of separation; how many regrets, hopes, afflictions, were here mingled together in that touching community of feeling, which bound together this portion of the human family; how many voices were simultaneously addressed to Him, in Whose hands are the winds and the waves; how many prayers commended to the loving intercession of the great Mother of the Saviour, the Star of the ocean; how many sighs lay deep buried in the hearts of the poor mothers who stood mourning the departure of their beloved sons!

The *Sémillante*, heavily tracking the waves, had disappeared in the horizon. The weather was fearful: nevertheless, calm and resigned, Captain Jugan concealed from human eye the emotions which agitated his soul—he was ready for the struggle.

On the night of the 15th, at the distance of several leagues from shore, and surrounded by rocks, the frigate was seized by a hurricane more violent than had ever been known in those parts. A strong wind blew from the south-east; the weather was so dark that day seemed turned into night—sky and

water were in mourning. The straits of Bonifacio looked like one immense breaker: no channels, no rocks were to be distinguished—all around was night with its darkness—the sea with its fury, the wind with its tempest. The waves ran mountains high; so that the *Sémillante*, creaking in all her timbers, was completely inundated, and the mist was so thick that no one on board could distinguish even the end of the bowsprit. It was impossible any ship in the world could live in such a sea; in the midst of rocks, whirlpools, breakers, certain destruction was before her. Captain Jugan well knew this, and in presence of the death which threatened all on board his ship, he doubtless felt his heart oppressed. There are circumstances in life in which a man voluntarily makes the sacrifice of his life, when he alone is exposed, and death, in the cause of duty, becomes even welcome. Decius threw himself in the abyss to appease the anger of the gods; but this man, when he saw the raging sea yawning to receive its crowd of victims—oh! then, in anticipation, he might well have died a hundred deaths. And then, perhaps, he would think—"What will France say at the news of this frightful catastrophe?—will she not exclaim, as to one of the heroes of antiquity, 'Varus, give me back my legions!'—will he be accused of want of foresight—of imprudence?—would there be doubts thrown out as to his nautical capacity—he, who had won by his knowledge and skill the esteem of all?"—such thoughts the brave captain might well be pardoned for entertaining at that critical moment, and they might have thrown doubt and despair into the heart of a less faithful christian. But knowing his noble character, one may presume—for alas, no witness ever returned from the sepulchre of the sea to relate the end of this fearful drama!—one may presume that the captain

of the frigate, as well as the chaplain, were both prepared to appear before God in this awful moment. Where is the peril in which religion is not almost sublime in the person of its ministers?

The chaplain, a young man, and an admirable priest, had, before embarking, a presentiment of his approaching end. "My dear friend," he wrote to one of the companions of his childhood, "my days are numbered, we shall never meet again in this world: a mysterious voice, speaking to me of celestial joys, has said—'Death awaits you yonder.' To die before having lived, before doing all the good of which we have dreamt, before ripening the harvest for heaven, is a sad thing: but I am ready to submit to the supreme will of God, and to finish my career of duty whenever and however He pleases. Adieu, my dear friend, pray for me when I am no more!"

They were there also,—those brave soldiers and pious christians whom we have seen before the holy altar,—they were there, stronger than the tempest; for the calm of resignation, and the hope of heaven, reigned in their souls. Tossed by the waves, which threatened every moment to engulph them, they would wait and pray; for they had offered themselves up at the altar of their Saviour, and His presence was still with them.

At eleven in the morning the watch at the lighthouse of La Testa perceived a frigate, whose uncertain movements indicated the loss of her rudder. She was coming under bare-sail from the north-west, and was advancing towards the shore of Reina Maggiore, near Cape la Testa. She was running infallibly on her destruction. Soon after, La Sémillante—for she it was—hoisted her foresail, and tacked towards the straits of Bonifacio, where she disappeared in an ocean of foam. As soon as she entered the straits she was borne on with a rapidity

which nothing could arrest. The east wind was blowing, as from a funnel, in the narrow passage between the two coasts; the tempest had become perfectly overwhelming—never had the sea in any latitude been more terrific; it seemed as if frightened at itself; the livid waves rose from their dark abysses like the sands with the simoon of the desert—the *Sémillante* was irrevocably lost. Fated to perish, with all on board, she entered between the islets of Lanezzi and Cavallo, where runs a chain of rocks a short distance from land. Dashed with resistless force against a sunken rock, the fearful shock broke her into a thousand pieces, burying in sudden destruction the seven hundred and fifty men who were on board.

Some days after, the sea, as if appeased by this immense holocaust, rested from its fury, and threw on the beach a number of dead bodies. Amongst those who could be recognized were found Captain Jugan and the chaplain. Death had found them bravely doing their duty—at their post in the hour of danger. Honour be to their memory, and peace to their souls!

There remains no more of the unfortunate *Sémillante* but the remembrance of her fearful end!

MATER ADMIRABILIS.

MUCH has been written, thought, and said on the subject of relics, and other objects of devotion, to which pious persons attach a just and lawful importance. This interesting theme is far from being exhausted, and on all sides much will still be written, said, and controverted about it. Strange inconsistency of the human mind ! I have known a well educated man, and sensible too, who shrugged his shoulders at the sight of a medal of the Blessed Virgin, and yet wore with veneration a stone in the form of an ornament, suspended to his watch chain ; this pebble had been picked up in the bed of a torrent said to have been rendered famous by the verses of Homer. Such an amateur, who would have thought himself dishonoured in bringing a chaplet from Rome, would willingly have put in his pocket all the ruins of the Forum, could he have done so. I have seen an Englishman give a sum of gold, to the housekeeper of the Château de Ferney, for the possession of the nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandth pen of Voltaire. A sensible man, who has not ceased declaiming for fifty years against the superstitious practices of the Catholic religion, fondly embraces night and morning an ugly stone found in the ruins of the Bastille. The willow of St. Helena has furnished wood sufficient to make a three decker. There is not an old monument in Europe, a ruin destroyed by time, a piece of ancient marble, nor a mosaic, which does not tempt the hand of the traveller.

This mania, inspired by love of the past, is it anything else than the worship of images and objects of devotion? The cockade of a soldier, the colours of a regiment, are they not to the warrior, what the image of Christ and the Holy Virgin are to the Christian? In religion, there are no little things, while in the minds of those who ignorantly criticise it, there are many little thoughts.

"Catholicism," said a professor of the University one day to a young lieutenant, "Catholicism is a religion of *préjugés* (prejudices)."

"I ask you a thousand pardons, Monsieur," answered the lieutenant, "but it seems to me at this moment, though I am quite ignorant of the meaning of the word, that you attribute to Catholicism a reproach which is really applicable to your own argument; from what comes the word *préjugé*?"

"From the Latin *prejudicare*."

"What is the true acceptation of *prejudicare*?"

"To judge before."

"Well, how can Catholicism be a religion of *préjugés*, since it only judges after, that is to say in full knowledge of the cause?"

The learned professor had found his master in the young lieutenant of artillery.

The *cultus* of images and other objects of this kind is universal; it is of all religions, all people, all ages. Pictures representing celebrated men; bronze and marble images we admire in our museums; portraits of aged parents, that we fondly venerate, in their gilt or wooden frames, are objects of devotion; autographs, which in our days have become a thing of commerce, a merchandise to the antiquary. An autograph, is an object of devotion; the hair, sweet gage of friendship, or sad remembrance of a cherished one; a lock of hair, is a relic.

How then can this veneration, admitted by all in a human sense, be ridiculous in a religious one?

There exists in Rome in the almost French soil of the Trinité-du-Mont, a holy house inhabited by the nuns of the Sacred Heart. Belonging to this house, which has become (so to say, since the residence of the French army in Rome) the sacristy of our brave soldiers, there exists a little chapel, elegantly ornamented, with that beautiful verse from the litany of Loretto "*Mater admirabilis*," traced underneath a picture of the celestial Mother, whom the lips of our earthly mother have taught us, as little children, to love and pray to. This holy image, is a means of inexhaustible consolation to the Trinité-du-Mont. How many tears are dried by a single look at the sacred form! how many griefs assuaged, wounds healed, hopes and mercies shed abroad by the "*Admirable Mother*" of the Sacred Heart in Rome! how many conversions! how many frank and loyal returns to God effected!

Among the numerous examples of the merciful and powerful protection of the "*Mater admirabilis*," there is one which I will relate to you, dear reader.

In the second month of the occupation of Rome by the French army, on the 23rd September, 1849, a Chasseur of the 2nd battalion of the 3rd regiment of light infantry, was carried, dangerously ill, to the hospital St. Bernard. Like many other young men, Jean Coulonnier had too much forgotten the religious principles of his childhood; contaminating publications, and the clubs and secret societies of 1848, had perverted those generous feelings, which placed in another atmosphere would still have retained their sway over his heart. Coulonnier had shared in the siege of Rome without any enthusiasm, for his sympathies were with the besieged rather than

with the besiegers, and he had taken no part in the triumph of his fellow soldiers. While in the hospital, he received a visit from a French priest of Courteyon, in the department of Vaucluse.

"What do you want with me, Monsieur?" said he.

"I am come to offer you some advice."

"You are a doctor, then?"

"Yes, my good fellow."

"Oh, oh! this is the first time that I have seen a doctor in a cassock; here is my hand, doctor, have I any fever?"

"I am a doctor, as I told you," gravely replied the Abbé Masson, "but I am a doctor of souls; it is not your hand that I want, but your heart."

"Oh! I understand; you have taken your degree in a priest's seminary. I have no confidence in that faculty, Monsieur l'Abbé, go and seek for practice elsewhere."

"Listen to me, my friend."

"You speak a different language to mine, Monsieur; adieu."

"In the name of your soul"—

"Leave me alone, I tell you."

"If you refuse the consolation of a priest, accept at least the attentions of a friend."

"Go your way, Monsieur l'Abbé, and leave me in peace."

"Adieu, then, my friend," said the worthy abbé, "I will come and see you again; perhaps you will be better disposed to-morrow; in the mean time I will pray for you."

The illness of Jean Coulonnier made in a few days such rapid progress, that the doctors held out no hope of cure. Buried in deep grief, given up to melancholy thoughts, the poor soldier not only refused all religious consolation, but closed his heart

even to the generous sympathy of his comrades. Not discouraged by his first attempt, the Abbé Masson returned as he had promised, and took his place by the side of the poor invalid, but from a feeling of prudence he avoided making any serious allusion to the object of his visit. Once, however, having seized a favourable moment to speak peace to the troubled conscience, Coulonnier stopped him by slowly pronouncing these words—

“I am a Protestant!”

“You are not less my brother, in the sight of God,” answered the abbé in an accent of deep conviction, “and as such, have a right to all my sympathies.”

“I am a Protestant, I tell you, go and seek practice elsewhere.”

The abbé repulsed a second time, took his departure with a sad heart, deeply affected by the excuses which the comrades of Coulonnier offered in his stead. From that moment, convinced that no human word could speak to the afflicted soul of the sick man, he resolved to ask from the Admirable Mother of the Sacred Heart, a whisper of that celestial voice, which penetrates, as a beam of light, the darkest recesses of the soul.

That day, all the nuns were assembled at the foot of the sacred image to celebrate one of the feasts in honour of the immaculate Mother of God. The Abbé Masson presented himself in the morning to the superior, and informed her of the object he had in view to bring back to the favour of God an erring son. Madame de——, took it up with the greatest eagerness. The obstinate sinner was then recommended to the prayers of the community. It was the 20th October, 1849. From that day until the 25th, fervent supplications were incessantly offered

to Heaven in favour of Jean Coulonnier ; but the unhappy rebel still persisted in his obduracy.

On the morning of the 25th, the abbé, having learnt that Coulonnier was not a Protestant, and that he had only denied his faith in order to raise a greater barrier between the priest and himself, informed the nuns of the Sacred Heart of this discovery, and recommended them still more to perseverance in prayer. After the holy sacrifice had been celebrated on behalf of the sick man, the abbé taking with him a blessed medal of the "*Mater admirabilis*," directed his steps towards the hospital with the confidence of a brave soldier, ready to undertake the assault of a redoubt considered impregnable. For, to true courage belongs difficulties ; the energy of the priest, like that of the soldier, increases under obstacles ; both become wearied on a smooth unruffled path ; both prefer a road sown with hardships ; a rugged journey, to a military promenade. In the most urgent moments of life, the commonest priest and the lowest soldier, both inspired in the accomplishment of their mission, can work prodigies, for they then become the instruments of Divine power. The priest, whom we see wrestling at this hour for a single soul, is only a poor country curé, a simple minded, humble hearted man, unpolished in conversation, knowing better the treasures of his priesthood than the riches of his language ; a true peasant under the clothing of a cassock ; well ! this man, this priest, who disrobed, would resemble a ploughboy more than a bishop, was about to find in the inspiration of his ardent charity the burning words of a Fénelon.

"You again !" cried Coulonnier, on perceiving him kneeling at the foot of his bed.

"Yes, my friend, it is I," replied the worthy

abbé, "one, who still loves you ; a friend, who wishes to ensure your happiness above, if he cannot do so on earth."

Coulonnier, whose gasping breath announced the near approach of his mortal agony, answered in his turn.

"Go, Monsieur, you annoy me with your talk about confession ; let me die in peace. Leave me."

"I will go on one condition."

"What is it ?"

"That you will permit me to suspend round your neck, this medal of the Mother of our Saviour."

"For what purpose ?"

"To remind you in your last moments of the mother you have so much loved !"

"Well ! be it so, make haste, and then go."

Saying this, Coulonnier, whose dim eyes were moistened with a tear, at the name of his mother, raised his head and leant on the priest's shoulder to receive the image of the "*Mater admirabilis*."

"Now, my friend, do you still wish me to leave you ?" said the Abbé Masson, whilst the comrades of the poor dying man prayed in silence, "do you wish me to go ?"

"Stay !"

"Give me your hand, my friend."

Coulonnier put his icy fingers in those of the priest.

"How do you find yourself at this moment ?"

"I am calmer—speak ; your voice does me good. Speak to me of my mother."

"Yes, of your mother, and of God, the father of all, before whom you must soon appear."

Coulonnier in tears pressed to his bosom the holy medal, murmuring broken words—they were the last expiring efforts of the strife which had been

going on within him. The "Mater admirabilis" had triumphed over the angel of darkness. The sinner was overcome. Raising himself up, he asked quickly to make his confession; and it was time, for death approached with rapid steps. An hour after, he received Communion and the holy Unction of the dying. The Abbé Masson kneeling by the bed of death, prayed unceasingly, but Coulonnier no longer repulsed him. Calm and consoled, because he believed; trusting and resigned, because he who had received from God the power to bind and to loose had prepared him for his journey; joyful even, because on the point of beginning his last march, he perceived at the end the goal of happiness. Coulonnier lived forty-eight hours in this happy state, praising God, and the admirable Mother of his Saviour, and quietly departed to his rest.

Mater Admirabilis ora pro nobis!

N.B.—The foregoing Tales are all by M. Balleydier, except Nos. Four and Seven.

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